

ASHOT MELKONYAN



JAVAKHK

**IN THE 19th CENTURY AND THE 1st
QUARTER OF THE 20th CENTURY**

YEREVAN 2007



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NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
INSTITUTE OF HISTORY

ASHOT MELKONYAN

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IN THE 19th CENTURY AND THE
1st QUARTER OF THE 20th CENTURY
(A HISTORICAL RESEARCH)

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A. A. Melkonyan

Javakhk in the 19th Century and the 1st Quarter of the 20th Century
(A Historical Research)

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Editor of the Armenian text

Emma Kostandian

Translator

Gayane Movsissian

Scientific Editor

E. L. Danielyan

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The work which presents the complete history of Javakhk based on rich archive materials and multi-lingual published literature treats the issue in the context of the general history of Northern Armenia. Stressing Javakhk's political significance at the present time, the book particularly dwells on the question of the local Armenians and the displaced Armenians from Western Armenia, with a special emphasis on the demographic trends observed there. It also gives a general picture of the socio-economic, spiritual and cultural life of Javakhk during the Russian domination (1828 to 1917) of the district. The book especially concentrates on the pivotal issues of the history of Javakhk in the context of the Armeno-Georgian relations between 1917 and 1921. It also elucidates the approaches of Georgian historiography to the problem of Javakhk.

Intended for the general reader, historians, political scientists and specialists in Caucasia.

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PREFACE

Today the history of Javakhk, Akhalkalak and the adjacent districts of Akhaltskha and Tzalka is still one of those domains of Armenian history that needs exhaustive study (it was only in recent decades that some researchers manifested certain interest in it). In the Soviet period, the discussion of the recent history of the problem, covering the 19th to 20th centuries, was banned for the Armenian historians. They either directly avoided investigating issues connected with Javakhk or confined themselves to the analysis of the friendship and cooperation of the Armenians and Georgians, instead of touching upon the complicated political problems facing these two peoples. Taking into account the current geopolitical changes in both Armenia and Georgia, as well as the fact that these countries, which have shared many misfortunes, are in process of strengthening their independence, it is in their interest that a complete revelation of historical truth be made, for the sake of establishing peace and cooperation in the region of Transcaucasia. It is important to clearly distinguish the pursuit of true history (with the painful lessons of the past and pivotal turning-points) from the present-day political problems and Armeno-Georgian cooperation. We are of the opinion that this study, which gives an outline of the ancient, medieval and recent (19th to early 20th centuries) history of Javakhk, with a particular emphasis on the issues of the most tragic period (i.e. 1918 to 1921) of its history, can be of utmost use for that cooperation.

The book mainly covers the 19th century as well as the period between the first decades of the 20th century and the Soviet times, marked by the active conquest policy of the Russian Empire in the Transcaucasian region, including Javakhk and its neighboring areas. Realizing that the elucidation of many problems regarding the aforementioned century is almost impossible without the study of the history of the preceding ones (at least in most general terms), we have devoted the first chapter of the work to the ancient and medieval history of Javakhk.

There exists a misleading perception that Javakhk and the neighboring districts of Akhaltskha, Aspindza and Tzalka bear no relation to Armenian reality and acquired Armenian identity only after the immigration of Western Armenians in 1830, which became possible thanks to the favorable demographic policy of the Russian government. To refute this viewpoint, we have devoted the first chapter of this work to the ethno-demographic picture of the region in the 16th to 17th centuries, with a concise history of Javakhk from ancient times to the late 18th century. We have done this by investigating different multi-lingual medieval sources, comparing the available Armenian and Georgian¹ bibliographical records, and citing official Turkish tax lists.

The second chapter deals with the political, administrative and demographic history (1801 to 1917) of Javakhk and other regions of Northern Armenia in the context of the Russian policy conducted there.

The third chapter treats the stormy period of 1918 to 1921.

The existing Turkish sources, part of which was translated into Armenian and published by A. Kh. Safrastian² and Avetis Papazian,³ are of exceptional importance to the research into the demography and socio-economic history of Northern Armenia in the 16th to 18th centuries. With this regard, special mention should be made of the Ottoman tax lists (davtars), translated and published in Georgian studies. Sergi Jikia translated a unique record (16th century) entitled *The Great Register of Gyurjistan Vilayet*⁴ published in the original Turkish language and Georgian translation. Ts. Abuladze and M. Svanidze studied and translated another tax list, *Jaba Register of Cheldr Eyalet* dating back to the late 17th and early 18th centuries.⁵

The works by 18th-century Georgian scholar Vakhushti Bagrationi and Ghukas Injijian, a member of the Mkhitarist Congregation (19th century), are also of certain interest with regard to the historical geography of Javakhk.⁶

The problem of Javakhk received more serious consideration in the 19th century: the Russian researchers particularly expanded their activities in this field in the first half of the century as a result of the establish-

ment of Russian dominion in the region. Unlike West-European researchers and authors of travelling notes, they focused their investigation on Akhaltskhā and Kars Provinces situated beyond busy transit roads.

With the active assistance of the Russian military authorities and the Russian Geographical Department in the Transcaucasian regions (founded by the Russian Military in 1830), a vast amount of archival materials were assembled (we studied them in Tbilisi, Moscow and Yerevan). On the order of I. F. Paskevich, the commander of the Caucasian Special Corps, a group of military officials carried out a thorough research into the Ottoman provinces bordering on the Russian Empire. Staff-Captain Iskritski carried out a statistical survey in his study of the eyalets of Akhaltskha and Erzurum, its results being published in a valuable work by N. Ushakov.⁷

Another important four-volume work was written after an expedition organized on the order of Minister of Finances Kankrin.⁸ In 1830 O. Yevetski's and P. Zubov's books were published.⁹ These authors made use of the reports of different committees, some of which were unpublished, despite their importance. One of these reports, kept in Russia's State Military Historical Archives and entitled *Notes about the Invasion of Asian Turkey by the Russian Troops Led by Count Paskevich (in Russian*)*,¹⁰ gives a detailed description of the Eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire, along with the general characteristics of Akhaltskha during the Russo-Turkish war of 1828 to 1829.

In the 1830s, certain aspects of the problem were also dwelt with by the Armenian scholars. Commissioned by Archbishop Karapet Bagratuny, several Armenian intellectuals from Erzurum embarked upon writing the history of the resettlement of 1830. According to a preserved archive document, Shahan Jrpelian, an Armenian from Erzurum living in Tiflis, was the author of one of these works. He sent his manuscript to Archbishop Karapet requesting the latter to read it and offer his comments.¹¹

* The titles of the works are given in English translation, with the language of the original text mentioned in brackets.

Sadly, however, we do not have it at our disposal, and this leaves many aspects of the problem obscure.

Father Gyut Aghaniant's book entitled *The Migration of Karin* (in Armenian) can be distinguished as an important study about this mass displacement, which is an important aspect in understanding the ethnic history of the districts of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak.¹²

In the second half of the 19th century, more detailed scientific works were written about Javakhk and the neighboring areas. On the order of the Tsarist government more and more expert-officials were engaged in the large-scale investigation into the history, geography and economy of Transcaucasia, this leading to the publication of monographs, series of books, collected works and periodicals on Caucasia.

Basing their research on these rich materials, G. Radde, L. Zagurski¹³ and Ch. A. Vermishev¹⁴ published books covering the socio-economic and cultural life of the region. N. Dubrovin¹⁵, V. Potto¹⁶, A. Shcherbatov¹⁷ and others produced studies presenting the military and political plans of Russia. The last three books, though essentially repeating what Ushakov had written about the Russo-Turkish war of the first half of the 19th century, revealed a lot of interesting facts of military history.

Christopher Vermishev, an economist and public activist, carried out gigantic work in Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak Districts of Tiflis Province. His book, which includes a considerable amount of statistical and economic material as well as information relating to other spheres, gives an all-encompassing history of the peasantry of the region in the 1980s. This publication is also of great value as a source of research.

M. N. Kuchayev, I. L. Bakhtadze, A. V. Parvitskin, Y. S. Medvedyev, I. Z. Andronikov, F. T. Markov and others published notable articles on land ownership, tax policy and different branches of the economy of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak Districts as well as entire Transcaucasia.¹⁸

Parts of this study concerning our thesis were included in a multi-volume *Collection of Materials for the Description of the Tribes and Localities of Caucasia*¹⁹ (in Russian) by I. V. Gopadze, V. Ivanov, A. Mikeladze, Kh. Asmarov (Asmarian), K. Grigorov (Grigorian), and others.

Amongst the available statistical studies worthy of mention is *Akhalkalak District of Tiflis Province* (in Russian) included in a statistical report on Caucasia.²⁰ Similar articles were published in the annals of the Caucasian Calendar. The works published in Moscow do not contain much information on Caucasia: with this regard, we can single out Baron Nikolai's traveling notes kept in the Russian Archives and containing considerable references to Akhaltskha District of Tiflis Province.²¹ In 1901 V. Ivanenko published his book on the administrative structure and governance of Transcaucasia.²²

Although the aforementioned official Russian literature is of great scientific value, it should be scrutinized and investigated still further. Almost all these works view Transcaucasia as merely a Russian colony inhabited by the subjects of the empire, and ignore the Caucasian peoples' national interests. The works devoted to the wars waged for Russian domination in the Transcaucasian region, absolutely lack assessment of the negative demographic tendencies of the Tsarist policies; instead, they praise the victories of the Russian troops.

At the end of the 19th century, great Armenian ethnographer Yervand Lalayan carried out a comprehensive study on the problem of Javakhk. Living and working in the region for many years, he succeeded in assembling a vast amount of historical, geographical, demographic and folklore material, which was published in parts in the *Azgagrakan Handes* (Ethnographical Journal) Armenian periodical. Thanks to Lalayan, the study of the history of Javakhk in the Armenian studies was placed on scientific grounds.

Seylan (Arshak Madoyan), an ethnographer and writer from Akhalkalak, as well as Yeghishe (Hovakim) Geghamiants and Sukias Eprikian, researchers from Akhaltskha, continued Lalayan's important work. Geghamiants published a series of articles in the *Pordz* monthly periodical about the life and activity of Archbishop Karapet, his work being based on a great number of archival documents.²³ Eprikian, on the other hand, devoted a special page of his *Illustrated Encyclopedia* (in Armenian) to Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak.²⁴ Compilations of numerous

published and unpublished materials of Seylan were recently published in a single book.²⁵

In response to certain misleading interpretations found in different scholars' works on the disputed areas in the Transcaucasian region, in 1919 Leo published his booklet entitled *Border Disputes* (in Armenian). It presented the approaches of Armenian historiography to the problem and questioned the Georgian researchers' views on Lori and Javakhk.

Prominent political figures like Simon Vratsian, the last Prime Minister of the first Republic of Armenia, and Arshak Jamalian, the diplomatic representative of Armenia in Georgia from 1918 till 1920, were among those engaged in the study of the history of Javakhk and Lori between 1918 and 1920, in the context of the general background of the Armeno-Georgian relations. Based on documented evidence and eye-witness accounts, Vratsian, in his famous book *The Republic of Armenia* (in Armenian), touched upon the Armeno-Georgian territorial disputes, the armed conflict of 1918, the refugees of Javakhk, and other related issues. In this regard, A. Jamalian's numerous works are of great significance, since they are based on abundant factual evidence, i.e. diplomatic notes, authentic inter-state agreements and other sources.²⁶ Most of his works were published overseas (they include his articles published in the "Hayrenik" periodical (Boston) and "Haraj" daily (Paris)).²⁷

The works by party-affiliated statesman Alexander Khatissian (*The Establishment and Development of the Republic of Armenia*. Beirut, 1968, in Armenian) as well as the articles by Artashes Abeghian, Rostom (Stepan Zorian) and others include certain interesting inquiries into the same problem.²⁸

The aforementioned works were published in response to Noy Zhordania's (the former chief of the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia) book entitled *Our Disagreements* as well as the countless anti-Armenian publications of the foreign press where many problems were viewed through a distorted mirror. Jamalian's analysis encompasses all the aspects of the Armeno-Georgian relations, including the territorial disputes over Akhalkalak and Borchalu. He studied the

problem from historical, geographical, administrative, political, economic and cultural perspectives, focusing on the right of self-determination, which was violated in every possible way, despite its having been formally declared acceptable by the Georgian Social Democrats. Jamalian's works, as he rightly pointed out, were important "...not only for the abolition of all the complicated issues ruining the relations of the two peoples but also for the political cooperation between Armenia and Georgia."²⁹

The correspondence of Poghos Abelian (a prominent intellectual, public figure, and Secretary of the Board of Akhalkalak Armenians' Union) and, particularly, his report entitled *Akhalkalak District* (in Armenian) and published in the press of the time, are of utmost significance for the study of the 1918 Turkish invasion of Javakhk, the deplorable conditions of the refugees, the policy of the Georgian authorities conducted in the district from 1919 to 1921, as well as for the interpretation of the territorial disputes between Armenia and Georgia. Written on the order of A. Mravian, National Commissar of Foreign Affairs of Soviet Armenia, the aforementioned report is kept in the National Archives of Armenia.³⁰ Of great interest for the matter under discussion is a series of articles entitled *The Present Economic and Political Situation in Akhalkalak District* and published in the "Zang" Armenian newspaper by a correspondent from Javakhk under the pseudonym of *Arax*.³¹

Famous politician Ruben Ter-Minassian's series of articles entitled *The Struggle of Akhalkalak* (in Armenian) gives a brief history of Javakhk from the Middle Ages till the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It has a special place amongst different research works devoted to Javakhk. Like Jamalian's articles, these articles are a response to the biased publications on the Armeno-Georgian relations issued by Georgian political figures in various European newspapers and magazines. The author draws the attention of Armenian investigators, political activists and intellectuals to the issues of the ethnic make-up of the population of Javakhk before the immigration of 1830. He points out that there are still some scholars and

political figures who "erroneously think that Akhalkalak was populated by Armenians only after the immigration of Erzurum, and that its inhabitants are non-natives. On the contrary, as a result of the aforementioned resettlement, the number of the Armenians living in the district increased, nothing more."³²

The Armenian historiographers of the Soviet times avoided the problem of Javakhk completely and treated it only superficially, without ever raising any political issues. In the 1960s, taking advantage of some freedom in the society, some Armenian researchers returned to many taboo subjects, including Akhalkalak. Making use of formerly secret archival documents, S. Kharmandarian elucidated the territorial disputes facing the Transcaucasian republics in the 1920s.³³ Brezhnev's rule, however, put an end to that work and investigation into the problem was again banned because of political considerations.

In the last decades of the Soviet regime, few but important works were published, among which can be distinguished the articles by B. Harutianian, K. Ghafadarian, M. Darbinian, Zh. Khachatryan, S. Shirinian and others.³⁴ In the Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia M. Darbinian published an article dealing with the settlements of Akhalkalak and Bogdanovka. T. Kh. Hakobian, St. T. Melik-Bakhshian and H. Kh. Barseghian published articles in the *Dictionary of Toponymy of Armenia and Adjacent Territories* (in Armenian).³⁵ Tz. Aghayan published a large monograph on the movement of Zoravar (War-Lord) Andranik's regiment towards Akhalkalak in the spring of 1918.³⁶

In the 1980s, the Armenian Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography made an attempt to return to the forgotten problem and published the first volume of Yer. Lalayan's works summarizing the famous ethnographer's all available works devoted to the basic problems of Javakhk.³⁷

In the 1970s and 1980s, using the rich scientific source material assembled from the archives of different countries, Richard Hovhannissian, a famous Armenian historian from the United States, wrote a large-scale work on the history of the first Republic of Armenia in which, among other basic issues, he also dwelt upon the problem of

Lori and Akhalkalak in the general context of the Armeno-Georgian relations of 1918 to 1920.³⁸

The restoration of the Armenian statehood gave the Armenian historiographers an opportunity to conduct serious investigation into the history of Javakhk and other complicated issues of Armenian history. Even during the Soviet years, a group of intellectuals from Javakhk, dissatisfied with the available published literature, traveled to numerous Armenian settlements of the region and assembled a vast amount of material. The newly-established social order gave most of these people a chance to publish their works, which mainly represented informative booklets³⁹ containing interesting details on the author's native village, its nature, inhabitants, their everyday lives and customs.

In the studies of distinct settlements of Javakhk can be mentioned Albert Isoyan's works, the latest of which gives a complete picture of Satkha, Metz (Greater) Aragyal and Pokr (Smaller) Aragyal Villages of Javakhk.⁴⁰

Mention should also be made of the works by A. Sanossian, A. Davtian and S. Aroyan. Using archival and ethnographic materials, Artyusha Sanossian published a great number of articles, the summaries of which were included in his valuable monograph entitled *The Self-Defence of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak Districts in 1918* (in Armenian).⁴¹ Through this work, the author showed that in the terrible days of 1918, the Armenians of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak were able to survive thanks to their heroic self-defence, although some of them chose the disastrous route of emigration.

In 2000 Yervand Simonian published a notable book in the Armenian language entitled *Akhaltskha in a Fiery Circle* (A. Sanossian makes very frequent references to its unpublished text). Apart from its scientific significance, this work is also of great source value because the author, a contemporary and immediate participant of the heroic struggle of Akhaltskha (1918), presents an account of those days with the awareness of an eyewitness.

Avetis Davtian's year-long valuable research resulted in two books entitled *Javakhk* and *The Armenian and Predominantly Armenian-Populated Settlements of Georgia* (in Armenian).⁴² Though of little scientific value, these works made some contribution to the study of the Armenian settlements in Javakhk and, particularly, throughout present-day Georgia.

The Armenian scholars also focused their studies on the history of the Catholic Armenians of Javakhk. Well-known Armenologist Pion Hakobian's book is a valuable contribution in this domain.⁴³ It elucidates the period covering the last decades of the 18th century, when a number of settlements inhabited by the members of the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Armenian population of Akhhaltskha City were converted to Catholicism. Salavat Aroyan touched upon the same subject in his valuable book entitled *Fragments of the Great Stone of Mush* (in Armenian).⁴⁴ With proper scientific approach and patriotic spirit, the author presents the history of a number of Javakhk villages and their inhabitants' ancestors from Mush, revealing numerous unknown pages of his native region's political and socio-economic history. This work stressed the importance of preserving national unity between the Catholic and Apostolic communities of the Armenians.

Samvel Karapetian, distinguished for his investigation into the historical and cultural monuments of different Armenian regions, also conducted most praiseworthy research in Javakhk. His work entitled *The Cross-Stones of Javakhk* (in Armenian)⁴⁵ was a major breakthrough in the study of the region's Armenian historical and cultural monuments and, particularly, cross-stones. The researcher personally succeeded in finding, deciphering and dating a great many khachkars, thus again proving that the Armenians have inhabited the region and created its culture since time immemorial.

Of particularly great value is S. Karapetian's large-scale work entitled *Javakhk* (Yerevan, 2006, in Armenian) which contains a vast amount of research material relating to the history of Javakhk and its monuments.

The problems of Javakhk have also been touched upon by well-known historians H. Simonian, G. Galoyan, H. Avetissian, A. Hambarian,⁴⁶ V. Ghazakhetsian,⁴⁷ Tz. Aghayan, E. Zohrabian, V. Tounian, E. Sargissian, A. Harutiunian, V. Diloyan, P. Mouradian, economist G. Karapetian and others.

H. Simonian's two volumes entitled *The Times of Andranik* (in Armenian)⁴⁸ deal with the Turkish conquest plans regarding Akhalkalak District during World War I; the approaches of the Armenian, Georgian and Azerbaijani politicians, as well as those of the Provisional Government and Transcaucasian Commissariat to the administrative repartition of Transcaucasia; the reasons for the interruption of Zoravar Andranik's military march towards Akhalkalak District in April 1918, etc.

H. Avetissian's work entitled *The Armenian Question in 1918* (in Armenian) encompasses the period between the conclusion of the treaties of Brest-Litovsk (March 1918) and Batum (June 1918), with a new interpretation of the conquest plans of the Ottoman Empire on the one hand, and the yet-to-be-investigated problems of the intense diplomatic struggle among the national and political forces of Transcaucasia over border issues on the other.

G. Galoyan's monograph, based on multi-lingual sources and entitled *Armenia and the Great Powers between 1917 and 1923*⁴⁹ (in Armenian), exposes the sly policy of the super powers of the time towards Armenia. It also makes a deep analysis of the complicated Armeno-Georgian and Turkish-Georgian inter-state relations and dwells upon the discussions on Javakhk, Lori, Karabakh and other disputed territories in the first months of the Soviet regime.

G. Karapetian's article entitled *Javakhk between 1830 and 1930*⁵⁰ (in Armenian) is based on published and archival material showing the displacement of the population of Javakhk and the progress of educational and spiritual life in each of the local settlements.

In summary, the existing Armenian historiographical works on Javakhk cannot be considered sufficient and exhaustive. We still lack

complete and comprehensive ones. The first step taken in this regard was a large-scale collection titled *Our Native Javakhk* (in Armenian) and published in Beirut in 2002. It includes part of the aforementioned works by R. Ter-Minassian, A. Jamalian and A. Abeghian (1920s to 1930s) as well as notable articles by a group of historians, political scientists and journalists presenting the history and cultural monuments of Javakhk along with the current geopolitical problems facing the district.⁵¹

Georgian historiography has widely covered the history of Javakhk and Samtskhe since the 19th century. During the pre-Soviet period, I. P. Rostomov (Rostomashvili), a teacher at St. Nino Female Gymnasium of Tiflis, carried out important research and assembled archaeological and ethnographical materials which were partly published in various periodicals devoted to Caucasian studies. One of his works, entitled *Akhalkalak District in Light of Archaeology*⁵² (in Russian) presents the history of Javakhk from ancient times until the establishment of Russian rule. His research is based on some records included in the *Chronology of Kartli* (ქართლის ცხოვრება). The second part of his work deals with the decipherment of the Georgian lapidary inscriptions found in Akhalkalak District.

However, Rostomov's choice of the materials of political history and lapidary sources is certainly biased. His work is based on exclusively Georgian sources, which has rendered it completely one-sided. Other researchers, guided by political considerations, often re-wrote the aforementioned book without ever bothering to investigate other sources. In fact, the problem of Javakhk was politicized from the very beginning. It is not by chance that another Georgian scholar, Ivan Gvaramadze, reproached the Armenians for "appropriating" Georgian lands and culture, demolishing their churches, and other "sins."⁵³

With regard to the Armeno-Georgian relations, can be distinguished historian and Armenologist Ivane Javakhishvili's book entitled *The Frontiers of Georgia*⁵⁴ (in Georgian) and dealing with the border disputes of 1918 to 1919. The author claims that the state of Georgia and its people have irrefutable, "legal" rights to Lori and Akhalkalak. In his opinion,

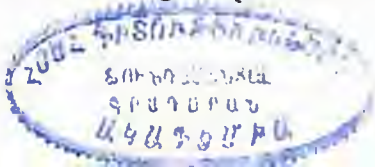
“the Georgians ought to take harsh measures against the Armenians’ attempts to appropriate Javakhetia.” He further demands that the Armenians, as newcomers, leave Akhalkalak District to its true owners, the Georgian Meskhetians, who were illegally driven out by the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁵

Javakhishvili’s viewpoints became more decisive and tenacious in the first years of the Soviet rule. In his report to the Georgian Government in the early 1920s, he stressed that, in border disputes, no concessions be made to Armenia. Moreover, if the Armenians were granted with autonomy within the territory of Georgia, that would seriously endanger the statehood of that country.⁵⁶

Thus, with the political censorship established under the Soviet regime, investigation into the problem of Javakhk became the absolute monopoly of Georgian historiographers. It was not accidental that in the decades that followed no foreign and, particularly, Armenian works devoted to this problem were published. Perhaps we could mention a valuable collection entitled *Javakhetia* (edited by academician N. Marr) and issued in the Russian language by the Commission of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in 1933. However, this anthology was of no historiographical value; rather, it represented research into the natural resources of Akhalkalak Plateau and its natural and climatic conditions.⁵⁷

It should be noted that formerly, Georgian historiographers avoided dealing with political problems and preferred publishing translations of foreign sources. The most remarkable example of this is the aforementioned three-volume work by academician S. Jikia (its Georgian translation and Ottoman original were published in the 1940s). The third volume of this series appeared in the 1950s, when the problem was politicized. Jikia’s interpretation of the question of Javakhk⁵⁸ was completely devoid of scientific objectivity and revealed the author’s obvious striving to present Akhaltskha Eyalet as one exclusively inhabited by Kartvelians, i.e. Georgians converted to Islam.

In the post-war years, Shota Lomsadze conducted circumstantial research into the problem covering the period between the 16th century



and the first half of the 19th century. One of his most valuable works is *Samtskhe-Javakhk (in Georgian)*. Comparing rich source materials and published literature, it deals with the history of Akhaltskha Pashalic and includes episodes of the late medieval struggle of the Kartli kings for domination in the region. The book also treats issues of the administrative governance of Akhaltskha under Turkish and Russian rule, the genealogy of the local pashas, the socio-economic life of the district as well as problems connected with the ethnic make-up of the citizenry.⁵⁹ It should be mentioned that the author shows a biased approach to certain issues, especially regarding the ethnic and religious make-up of the local population. Particularly disputable is Lomsadze's allegation that the Meskhetians were of Georgian origin and did not comprise any Christians or Turks. Nor can we accept his view that the Catholic populations of Samtskhe-Javakhk, including the Armenian Catholics, were of purely Kartvelian origin.

In view of historical archaeology can be distinguished the works by L. Davlianidze,⁶⁰ E. Jandieri⁶¹ and V. Tsiskarishvili.⁶²

In recent years, the problem of Javakhk has received even wider discussion in Georgian historiography due to its current political importance. In this regard, Devi Berdzenishvili⁶³ and Lavrenti Janiashvili⁶⁴ are particularly diligent: the former dealt with the historical geography of the region by publishing a long article entitled *Javakheti Akhalkalak (in Georgian)*, in which he presented the Georgian historiographers' viewpoints regarding the issue, "scrutinized" the data provided by Armenian sources and criticized the Armenian historians' and politicians' "claims." Comparing various sources, the author tries to prove that Akhalkalak and its districts are not anyway associated with the Armenians. He casts doubt on the trustworthiness of the cross-stones attesting to the Armenians' existence in Javakhk. Furthermore, he considers that the available sources about the Armenians contain only doubtful and unessential information about them.⁶⁵

Janiashvili, in his 1999 Ph.D. thesis entitled *The Everyday Life and Culture of the Armenian Population of Samtskhe-Javakhetia* (in

Georgian) states, "The ethnographic study of the non-Georgian population of our country does not only have a scientific value but is also of practical significance, given the current tense socio-political and economic conditions."

Berdzenishvili and Janiashvili did not introduce any breakthrough in the study of the problem, but repeated the previous researchers' allegations that the Armenians of Akhalkalak District are "non-natives," the Armenian Catholics and "Meskhetian" Turks are of Georgian origin; the Russian Empire conducted an anti-Georgian and pro-Armenian policy forcing the Armenians to settle down in the region, etc.. Perhaps, the only novelty in their works, which is more of a political character than scientific, is that in recent years, the Armenians of Javakhk have manifested separatism.⁶⁶

Janiashvili's "novelty" is that after the Adrianople Treaty of 1829, when the Western Armenians settled down in Javakhk, they widely "appropriated" numerous features of the Georgian mode of life, including crafts, stock breeding and ways of building houses. Evidently, this scholar is unaware of, or is reluctant to accept, the fact that the Armenians of Erzurum, as attested by various contemporary multi-lingual sources, held an advanced position in Western Asia thanks to their high level of development. Naturally, they could not have been influenced by the locals, since the districts of Akhalkalak and Akhaltskha were mostly deserted and almost devoid of any Georgian population before the immigration of 1830. On the contrary, it was the displaced Armenians who influenced the small Georgian community living there. It is interesting to note that both the former and the present-day Georgian researchers basically ignore the existing Armenian sources as well as the Georgian and foreign ones containing "pro-Armenian" records.

In their work entitled *The Armenians in Georgia* (in Georgian) and dedicated to the Armenians of Javakhk as well as those living throughout Georgia, Shota and Otar Tetvadze continue "developing" a viewpoint widely accepted in Georgian historiography. It claims that in the late 18th century, the class of Armenian merchants and usurers as well as the

Armenian clergy pursued the objective of Armenianizing Georgia by inhabiting it with Armenians through the support of the Russian Empire.⁶⁷

Among the works dedicated to the problem of Javakhk and the Armeno-Georgian inter-church relations, Bondo Arveladze's booklet⁶⁸ entitled *Armenian or Georgian Churches in Georgia?* (in Russian) stands out as one of the most biased ones. It alleges that the majority of the Armenian churches presently in Georgia were originally Georgian sanctuaries. He then continues that the immigrant Armenians re-consecrated them as Armenian Apostolic churches and took possession of them illegally. Bondo Arveladze, who did not abstain from using various indecent expressions about the Armenians, wrote an article in Georgian in which he advised the Armenians to give up their territorial "claims" to their neighbors to escape the repetition of the events of 1915 (i.e. the Genocide of the Armenians - A. M.).⁶⁹

Another Georgian scholar, Avtandil Menteshashvili, touched upon the problem of Javakhk in the general context of the Armeno-Georgian relations of 1918 to 1920. He published a number of works, including a large document on the official viewpoint of the Democratic Republic of Georgia regarding the Armeno-Georgian war of 1918. Faithful to this biased paper, the original of which is kept in Harvard University Library,⁷⁰ Menteshashvili concludes that in the autumn of 1918, the Georgian authorities displayed a compassionate attitude towards the Armenian population of Lori, while the Armenian government, without any reason, incited them to a rebellion and aggression against Georgia. The author rejects the ethnographic principle as a method for determining borders (it was put forward by the Armenian political circles). Instead, he gives preference to the principle of historical possession, by the latter implying Lori and Javakhk.⁷¹

Ketevan Kutateladze's book is, perhaps, the "last word" in Georgian historiography relating to the problems of Northern Armenia and, particularly, Lori. The author criticizes the approaches of the Armenian scholars and develops the Georgian historiographers' allegations that Gugark

Province (together with Javakhk and Tashir) has been a Georgian territory since time immemorial. He focuses his attention on the history of the Kyurikian Kingdom of Tashir-Dzoraget and the Orbelians' family (mainly 10th to 14th centuries). Kutateladze claims that the history of the Kyurikians is an inseparable part of the history of Georgia, and Gugark-Lori, Treghk, Ashotsk as well as other adjacent territories form the historical region of Kvemo Kartli (Interior Kartli).⁷²

The number of Georgian works devoted to the issue of Javakhk is increasing with every single passing day. In recent years, two large-scale volumes appeared on Javakhk and Aspindza.⁷³ Without discussing the issues in these two volumes, let us note that there are far more Georgian than Armenian research works on this topic. Taking into consideration the fact that there is a lack of complete and concise works on the problem of Javakhk, we have tried to present the history of this region covering the period between the 19th and early 20th centuries by making use of various unpublished sources. This study also covers issues associated with the territories adjacent to Javakhk.

Researchers in the field have not studied most of the existing archive materials which are of exceptional value to the theme in question. Special mention should be made of a wide variety of archive documents kept in the National Archives of Armenia (Georgian-Imeretian Funds 35, 53; Church Funds 56, 57; Fund 355 of Akhalkskha's Spiritual Authorities). Archive materials on the socio-economic, spiritual and cultural life of Georgia's Armenian diocese (parish registers, lists of villages, economic and church activities, religious issues, etc.) as well as its constituent Akhalkskha, Akhalkalak and Tzalka Districts can be found in thousands of folders of these funds. The utilization of these archives will elucidate many facets of Javakhk's history of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Fund 200 contains many official documents that can shed light on the inter-state Armeno-Georgian relations between 1918 and 1920.

The study of the history of Akhalkalak during the aforementioned period would have been impossible but for the materials kept in the National Archives of Armenia. Matenadaran (Armenian Repository and Research

Institute of Manuscripts named after Mesrop Mashtots), as well as the State Central Historical Archives of Georgia. Of special interest are the documents kept in Funds 112, 113, 114 and 128 of the National Archives of Armenia (most of them were considered secret until very recently).

Hundreds of documents kept in the Matenadaran (in the funds of the Catholicosate, Archbishop Karapet, Nerses Ashtaraketsi, Alexandre Yeritsian, the Lazarians and others), elucidate the 1830 displacement of the Western Armenians and the hardships the immigrants suffered in Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak. They also dwell upon details of the socio-economic and spiritual life of the region.

A large amount of archive material can be found in Tbilisi, the administrative, political, economic and cultural centre of Transcaucasia during more than a century-long Russian domination (in the mid-19th century, it became the administrative centre of Tiflis Province, which included Akhalkalak District). The funds of the State Central Historical Archives of Georgia (Nos. 2, 11, 16 and others) contain extensive information on the Russian policy conducted in the region, its administrative, economic and cultural life as well as the ethnic displacements observed there.

Of utmost priority are the archives of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, the State Military Historical Archives of Russia (Moscow) and the State Central Archives of Russia (St. Petersburg). Of particular value are funds 20, 114 and 450 of the State Military Historical Archives of Russia as well as a number of documents (Nos. 2875, 4643, etc.) kept in the Military Training Archives.

While working on the problem, we revealed a considerable amount of material in Leo's personal fund in the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia as well as in Akhalkalak's Museum of Regional History and in the archives of other institutions.

It should be noted that only a very small part of the archival records relating to the problem of Javakhk has been published so far. The majority of the documents published in the 19th century were included in the 12 volumes of the well-known "Acts"⁷⁴ printed by the Caucasian Archaeological Committee. This collection contains multifaceted unique

official documents on the history of Transcaucasia: although often one-sided, they are of great significance as a source. The Institute of History of Armenia's Academy of Sciences published a valuable anthology entitled *The Incorporation of Eastern Armenia into Russia*⁷⁵ (in Armenian) and containing a great number of archive documents which clearly show the significance of the region in the context of the eastern policy of the Russian Empire. With regard to the socio-economic history of 19th-century Transcaucasia, of great interest is a collection of documents entitled *The Socio-Political and Economic Situation in Eastern Armenia after Its Incorporation into Russia. 1830 to 1870* (in Armenian).⁷⁶

The overwhelming majority of archival publications of the early decades of the 20th century is devoted to and elucidates the Armeno-Georgian conflict over Javakhk and Lori (their publication started in 1919).⁷⁷ Undoubtedly, the most valuable source published by Armenian researchers is an anthology of documents and materials edited by G. Galoyan and V. Ghazakhetsian in 2000.⁷⁸ The authors put into circulation a large number of secret documents providing a clear picture of the development of the Armeno-Georgian relations, the biased policy on the border disputes between the two countries adopted by the English commanders' staff, etc. While dealing with the same question, Ghazakhetsian republished in the "Nork" periodical the very interesting series of articles of famous prose writer Aksel Bakunts, previously issued in the "Hayastani Ashkhatavor."⁷⁹ Searching different German archives, academician V. Michaelian compiled a highly valuable collection of documents on the massacres of Akhalkalak and the refugees' conditions⁸⁰ in 1918.

In the Soviet years, S. Kharmandarian⁸¹ published certain materials on the dispute between the Armenian and Georgian Bolsheviks over Akhalkalak and Tzalka (1921) and, particularly, the July decisions made by the Plenum of the Caucasian Bureau of the Russian Communist Workers' Party and the Political Bureau of the Georgian Communist Party. It was academician G. Galoyan who discovered these records in the secret funds of the Institute of Marxism and Leninism and transferred them to the Armenian branch of the same archives.⁸²

Realizing the importance of disseminating unbiased scientific and political archival materials, concurrent with our writing of the history of Javakhk, we embarked on the publication of a number of important documents assembled from different Armenian archives. The papers deal with the events of the pivotal period of 1918 to 1921⁸³ and offer a new interpretation of the Turkish invasion of Akhalkalak in 1918, the deplorable conditions of Akhalkalak people in the-refugee camps as well as the policy of the Georgian authorities and the inter-state relations between Armenia and Georgia.

Various problems of the Armenian history of the 19th to 20th centuries, including the issue of Javakhk, were touched upon and discussed in the press of the time as well. Of paramount importance is one of the giants of the Armenian press, the "Mshak" of Tiflis, which reports the events of the last quarter of the 19th century and those of the 20th century. Of special importance is the correspondence of Bagrat Pijikian, a well-known intellectual from Akhalkalak, who presents an objective picture of the socio-political, economic and cultural life of the district.

The stormy events of 1917 to 1921, in which Akhalkalak Armenians were entrapped, were widely elucidated in the press of the early 20th century ("Mshak," "Horizon," "Zang," "Ashkhatavor" and "Hayastani Ashkhatavor"). Among the many authors of articles, petitions and correspondence, the names of Poghos Abelian and Priest Arsen Beltsian are worthy of mention. Apart from elucidating the events, they assisted the refugees of Akhalkalak immensely. The "Sharzhum" newspaper printed in Akhaltskha was remarkable for the particular trustworthiness of the information it disseminated. As an important source for the study of the cultural life of the region can be mentioned the "Javakhk" weekly (1913 to 1916), the first periodical in Akhalkalak published by Vardan Shahparonian.

The Armeno-Georgian relations and the territorial problems associated with Lori and Javakhk were also elucidated in the Diasporan Armenian press of the 1920s. In the Soviet Armenian press, however, these issues were banned altogether. Later the Diasporan Armenian press

- (Mikheil Svanidze. *Jaba Register of the Vilayets of Kars, Childir and Trebizond: 1694 to 1732*. In: *Materials of the Symposium on Akhaltsikhe-Kars. Akhaltsikhe-Kars*), 2001, pp. 65-75.
- 6 See Chronology of Kartli. vol. 4, pp. 669-670: Ինճիրճեան Ղ., Աշխարհագրութիւն չորից մասանց աշխարհի, Ի. Ա. Վենետիկ (Injjjian, Gh. *Geography of the Four Parts of the World*, vol. 1, Venice), 1806.
 - 7 История военных действий в азиатской Турции в 1828-1829 гг., ч. 1-2, СПб. (*A History of the Hostilities in Asiatic Turkey between 1828 and 1829*, parts 1-2, St. Petersburg), 1836. Also see the second edition of the same work: Варшава (Warsaw), 1843.
 - 8 Обзорение российских владений за Кавказом в статистическом, топографическом и финансовом отношениях, ч. 4, СПб. (*A Review of the Russian Dominions in Transcaucasia from Statistical, Topographical and Financial Standpoints*, part 4, St. Petersburg), 1836.
 - 9 Зубов Платон, Картина Кавказского края принадлежащего России и сопредельных ему земель, СПб. (*Zubov, Plato. A Picture of the Caucasian Region belonging to Russia and the Adjacent Territories*. St. Petersburg), 1835; Статистическое описание Закавказского края, сост. Орест Евецкий, СПб. (*A Statistical Description of Transcaucasia*. Compiled by Orest Evetsky, St. Petersburg), 1835.
 - 10 РГВИА, ф. ВУА, д. 4643, лл.1-285 (State Military Historical Archives of Russia. Military Training Archives. file 4643, pp. 1-285).
 - 11 Մատենադարան, Կարապետ արք. արխիվ, քրք. 163գ, վավ. 1252, ք. 1 (Matenadaran: Archives of Archbishop Karapet, folder 163, file 1252, p. 1).
 - 12 Աղանյանց Գ., Կարն գաղթը (1829-1830), Թիֆլիս (Aghaniants, G. *The Migration of Karin (1829 to 1830)*, Tiflis), 1891. The author made wide use of the materials of Yezrem Sethian (Seth). one of the heads of the resettlement of the Armenian Catholics. They were published by M. Karapetian, who had discovered them in the archives of Mkhitarist Congregation, Venice, Austria. Also see Կարապետյան Մ., Եփրեմ Սեթը արևմտահայության 1829-1830 թթ. գաղթի մասին, ՊԸՀ (Karapetian, M. *Yezrem Seth about the 1829 to 1830 Resettlement of Western Armenians*. In: "Patma-Banasirakan Handes," 1997, No. 2, pp. 285-294).
 - 13 The works by G. Radde and L. Zagursky were often mistakenly identified due to their consecutive publication under the same title (Поездка в ахалцихский уезд в 1872 г., i. e. 'A Journey to Akhaltskha District in 1872) and in the same scientific series: Записки кавказского отдела императорского русского географического общества (ЗКОИРГО), книга 8, Тифлис (Transactions of the Caucasian Branch of the Russian Imperial Geographical Society, book 8, Tiflis), 1873, pp.1-46, 47-85.

- 14 **Вермишев Х. А.**, Экономический быт государственных крестьян в ахалцихском и ахалкалакском уездах тифлисской губернии, Материалы для изучения экономического быта государственных крестьян Закавказского края (МИЭБГКЗК), т. 3, Т. (Vermishev, Kh. A. The Economic Conditions of State Peasantry in Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak Districts of Tiflis Province. In: Materials for the Study of the Economic Conditions of State Peasantry in Transcaucasia, vol. 3, Tiflis), 1886, pp. 1-282.
- 15 **Дубровин Н.**, История войны и владычества русских на Кавказе, т.1, кн.1, СПб., 1881, т. 5, СПб., 1887, т. 6. СПб., 1888 (Dubrovin, N. A History of the Russian War and Dominion in Caucasia, vol. 1, book 1, St. Petersburg, 1881; vol 5, St. Petersburg, 1887; vol. 6, St. Petersburg, 1888).
- 16 **Потто В.**, Кавказская война в отдельных эпизодах, легендах и биографиях, т. 1, вып. 3, Т., 1885, т. 4, вып. 1-4, Т., 1887-1888 (Potto, V. The Caucasian War in Certain Episodes, Legends and Biographies, vol. 1, part 3. Tiflis, 1885; vol. 4, parts 1-4, Tiflis, 1887-1888).
- 17 **Генерал-фельдмаршал князь Паскевич**, составил князь А.Щербатов, т. 3, СПб. (Field Marshal General and Prince Paskevich. By Prince Sherbatov. A., vol. 3, St. Petersburg).
- 18 See the articles of the aforementioned authors in: Свод материалов по изучению экономического быта государственных крестьян Закавказского края (СМИЭБГКЗК) (A Collection of Materials for the Study of the Economic Conditions of State Peasantry in Transcaucasia, vol. 1, part 2, Tiflis, 1887, pp.1-58, 60-231; vol. 2, pp. 93-192; vol. 3, part 1, pp. 1-184; vol. 4, part 2, pp. 1-135; vol. 5, part 1, pp.157-357; vol. 5, part 2, pp. 73-149, 151-337), etc.
- 19 **Сборник материалов для описания местностей и племен Кавказа (СМОМПК)** (A Collection of Materials for the Description of the Tribes and Localities of Caucasia, part 1, edition 1, Tiflis, 1881, pp. 69-80; part 11, book 1, Tiflis, 1891, pp. 182-216; part 17, book 1, Tiflis, 1893, pp. 90-103).
- 20 **Ахалкалакский уезд тифлисской губернии. Статистический временник Кавказского края**, вып. 2, Т. (Akhalkalak District of Tiflis Province. In: A Statistical Register of Caucasia, part 2, Tiflis). 1887, pp.1-95.
- 21 **Русский архив**, М., кн. 2 (Russian Archives. Moscow, book 2), 1892, pp. 462-478.
- 22 **Иваненко В. Н.**, Гражданское управление Закавказьем..., Т. (Ivanenko, V. N. The Civil Government of Transcaucasia..., Tiflis). 1901.
- 23 **Գեղամյանց Յ.**, Կարապետ արքեպիսկոպոս, Փորձ, Թ. (Geghamiants, H. Archbishop Karapet. In: "Pordz," Tiflis), 1876, No. 1; 1877, No. 3: Also see the second edition of the work: **Գեղամյանց Հ.**, Կարապետ արքեպիսկոպոս (Կենսագրություն), առաջաբանը և ծանոթագրությունները Ա. Մելքոնյանի, Ե. (Geghamiants, H. Archbishop Karapet: Biography. With a foreword and notes by Melkonyan, A. Yerevan):

- 24 **Էփրիկյան Ս.**, Պատկերագրող բնաշխարհիկ բառարան, հ. Ա, Վենետիկ (Էփրիկյան, H. S. An Illustrated Encyclopedia, vol. 1, St. Lazarus, Venice), 1902, pp. 53-61, 67:
- 25 **Սեյլան**, Նշմարներ, Ե. (Seylan. Traces. Yerevan), 1999:
- 26 Having found some of the originals of these archive documents in different Armenian archives, we attached them to the Armenian original of this work. Another part of them was included in a valuable collection of documents entitled «Հայաստանի Հանրապետությունը 1918-1920 թթ. (քաղաքական պատմություն)»: Կազմողներ՝ Գ. Գալոյան, Վ. Ղազախեցյան, Վ. Մելիքյան, Ս. Սիրզոյան, Ա. Վիրաբյան, Ե. (The Republic of Armenia between 1918 and 1920: A Political History. Compiled by Galoyan, G., Ghazakhetsian, V., Melikian, V., Mirzoyan, S., Virabian, A. Yerevan).
- 27 **Ջամալյան Ա.**, Հայ-վրացական կնճիղը, Հայրենիք, 1928 ապրիլ – 1929 ապրիլ: Իմ պատասխանը «Պրոմեթե»-ի և «Անկախ Վրաստան»-ի հրապարակազրկներին, Հառաջ, 1928, 12 հունիս - 11 հուլիս (Jamalian, A. The Armeno-Georgian Problem. In: "Hayrenik," April 1928 to April 1929. Idem. My Response to the Publicists of the "Promete" and "Ankakh Vrastan." In: "Haraj," June 12 to July 11 1928, Nos. 671-696).
- 28 **Աբեղեան Ա.**, Մենք եւ մեր հարեւանները, Հայրենիք, 1928, դեկտեմբեր, N 2, Ռոստոմ, Հայ-վրացական փոխյարաբերությունները, ՎԷՍ, 1936, հունվար-փետրվար (Abeghian, A. Our Neighbours and We. In: "Hayrenik." December 1928. No. 2; Rostom. The Armeno-Georgian Relations. In: VEM, January to February 1936, No. 1).
- 29 **Jamalian, A.** The Armeno-Georgian Problem. In: "Hayrenik," April 1929, p. 157.
- 30 ՀՀ ՆՊԿՊԱ, ֆ. 114, ց. 2, գ. 3, ք. 122-134 (National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 3, pp. 122-134).
- 31 Չանգ, Երևան, 1919, 22 մարտ, N 33 և 30 մարտ, N 36 ("Zang," Yerevan, March 22, 1919, No. 33; March 30, No. 36):
- 32 **Ռուբեն**, Ախալքալակի պայքարը, Դրոշակ, Փարիզ (Ruben. The Struggle of Akhalkalak. In: "Droshak," Paris), 1926, No. 1: Հայաստան, ՀԱԱԿ պաշտոնաթերթ, Ե. ("Hayastan," Yerevan), 1990, Nos. 17-18, p. 11. The seven-volume series by the same author («Հայ յեղափոխականի մը յիշատակները», Թեհրաս (The Memoirs of an Armenian Revolutionary. Teheran). 1982)) includes interesting materials on his Javakhk compatriots' and his own participation in the liberation struggle of Western Armenians in the late 19th century.
- 33 **Хармандарян С. В.**, Ленин и становление закавказской федерации, Е. (Kharmandarian, S. V. Lenin and the Establishment of the Transcaucasian Federation. Yerevan), 1969.
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84 Իրան-նամե ("Iran-Name"), 1998, Nos. 1-3, pp. 12-16; Լրաբեր հասարակական գիտությունների ("Lraber Hasarakakan Gitutiunneri"), 1998, No. 3, pp. 17- 32; Հանդես անսորեայ ("Handes Amsorea"), 1998, Nos. 1-12, pp. 325-344; Կանթեղ, Գիտական հոդվածների ժողովածու, հ. 2, Ե. ("Kantegh." A Collection of Scientific Articles, vol. 2, Yerevan), 2001, pp. 166-179; «Ազդակ», բացառիկ, Բեյրութ, 1999, 24 ապրիլ («Azdak." Exclusive. Beirut, April 24, 1999), pp. 106-114; «Ազատամարտ» ("Azatamart"), 1992, April 24; Դրոշակ ("Droshak," October 1999), No. 16; Նորք ("Nork"), 1999, No. 2; Խորհրդային Հայաստան ("Khorhrdayin Hayastan," November 14, 1989); Հայաստանի Հանրապետություն ("Hayastani Hanrapetutian," June 27, 1998), p. 7, etc.

CHAPTER ONE

JAVAKHK DURING THE ANCIENT PERIOD AND IN THE MIDDLE AGES (A HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION)

Gugark was the thirteenth of the fifteen provinces of Metz Hayk (Armenia Maior) Kingdom of Historical Armenia. It occupied the northern part of the Armenian Highland and bordered on Utik in the east, Tayk in the west, Ayrarat in the south, and Iberia (Georgia) in the north. Gugark, that represented one of the four vitaxates of the Armenian Kingdom, enjoyed certain independence, its administrative center being the town of Tsurtav. Its nine principal districts were Dzoropor, Koghbopor, Tzobopor, Tashir, Treghk, Kangark, Kgharjk, Verin (Upper) Javakhk and Artahan.¹

Javakhk, which is mentioned as the eighth district of Gugark, was situated in the center of the province and mainly occupied the plateau of the same name (Akhalkalak Plateau, Javakhk Table-Land) as well as the territory of the mountainous formations encircling this table-land. It bordered on Treghk (Trialet) in the north, Samsar in the northeast, the Javakhk Mountains (Kechut, Mtin) in the east, the table-land of Ashotsk (the continuation of Akhalkalak Plateau) in the southeast, and the Yeghnakhagh (Cheldr) Mountains in the southwest.

Javakhk is located at an average altitude of 1,800 metres above sea level. Its highest peak is Abul (3,301 metres). The climate is severe, with long, cold winters and short, cool summers. The annual average temperature oscillates between 4 and 4.5° C. The district is rich in lakes such as the Parvana, the Tabatzghuri, the Saghamo, the Khozapin, the Khanchali and the Madatapa. The Taparvan tributary (it may be etymologized as 'something flowing from Parvana') takes source in Lake Parvana and merges into the river Kur near the fortress of Khertvis. The entire plateau

is covered with black earth. Almost the whole territory of Javakhk is bare of forests, except for its northern part. In the past, the central part of Javakhk, i.e. the area between the stream of Taparvan and the mountains of Treghk and Samsar was covered with woods and was known as *Antarayin Javakhk* (Forested Javakhk).

As attested by the Urartian (kingdom of Van) inscriptions of the late 9th century B.C., the name of 'Javakhk' is an altered version of the name of 'Zabakha,' a state located in the northern part of the Armenian Highland. In the course of time, this Armenian toponym underwent the following phonetic transformation: Zabakha-Jabakha-Javakha-Javakhk.²

The Khorkhor inscription engraved by Argishti I (786 to 764 B.C.) mentions Zabakha among the following regions occupied between 785 and 784 B.C.: Diaukhi (or Daya, i.e. Tayk) and Tariuni (Daruynk, i.e. Basen). The state of Etiuni resisted Argishti's invasion, but to no avail.³ This suggests that prior to the expansion of Urartu, Javakhk either formed part of the state of Etiuni or was dependent on it. This district is also mentioned in the inscriptions of Argishti's successors.

These are the earliest records of the toponym. The study of the pre-Urartian period indicates that in the late Bronze Age, Javakhk, which was situated on the commercial routes connecting the coastal cities of the Black Sea with the settlements of Vanand, Shirak, the Ararat Valley, as well as with those lying in the basin of the Chorokh,⁴ either formed an administrative part of one of the early Armenian state formations such as Daya-Diaukhi (Tayk), Etiuni and Hayasa, that existed in the 2nd millennium B.C., or itself was a relatively large independent state occupying the entire western part of Gugark Province.

The available sources treating the period of the Orontid (Yervanduni) Kingdom (6th to 2nd centuries B.C.) contain almost no records with direct reference to Javakhk. Mention can be made of only two notable references found in the History of the Armenians by Moses Khorenats'i (5th century A.D.) and Kartlis Tskhovreba. The great Armenian historian writes that Vagharshak I bequeathed "...half of Chavakh..." to Gushar, descended from the sons of Sharay, and appointed him *bdeshkh* (*vitaxa*)

of the province so that he would defend the Armenian land against the North-Caucasian highlanders.⁵

Stepanos Taronetsi the Asoghik reports almost the same with a slight difference:

“And Gushar, one of Shara’s sons, inherited the dark mountain of Kangark, half of Javakhk, Koghb, Tzop and Dzor up to the Fort of Hunarakert.”⁶

Most researchers trace Vagharshak, a collective semi-mythological figure, back to the 3rd century B.C. This suggests that Javakhk constituted part of the Orontid Kingdom and was bequeathed to Gushar, whose name derives from Gugark. Thus, Javakhk, that represented a large province, merged into the newly-formed adjacent vitaxate of Gugark and was divided in two parts: Verin (Upper) Javakhk and Nerkin (Lower) Javakhk.

The “...half of Chavakh” mentioned by Khorenats’i is Verin Javakhk, which occupied the elevated southern and northeastern parts of the district and was united with the neighboring district of Shirak belonging to Shara. Naturally, Nerkin Javakhk was situated at a lower elevation as compared to the former. This geographical position is typical of the small historical district of Aspnjak (‘Aspindza’ in Georgian), which is situated to the west and northwest of the region.

It is interesting to note that in the 3rd century B.C., Kartlis Tskhovreba presented the altered “Georgian” version of the aforementioned statement by Moses Khorenats’i. Accordingly, the district was bequeathed to Javakhos. The Georgian Parnavazid state (also known as Iberia and Virk) was established in the north of Metz Hayk in the 270s B.C. It occupied Gugark, Javakhk and other adjacent territories with the assistance of the Seleucids, the archenemies of the Armenian Orontids. At that time, the center of Javakhk was the fortress of Tzunda,⁷ called Kajatun, or Kajats Kaghak (Town of the Brave) by the Armenians. Greek historian Strabo, who bears witness to the recapture of the aforementioned territories from the Georgians, writes that in the 2nd century B.C., Armenian King Artashes (Artaxiad) I

(189 to 160 B.C.) conquered (i.e. returned - A. M.) Gogarene, i.e. Gugark, from the Iberians and made it part of his country together with other lands.⁸

The Georgian sources offer another interpretation for the same record: thus, according to Leonti Mroveli, the Georgians (or Kartvelians) incited the Osetins⁹ (the very Alans mentioned in the Armenian sources) to rise in struggle for Javakhet against Artashes. This implies that the Armeno-Alanian war mentioned in Khorenats'i's well-known legend entitled *Artashes and Satenik* was waged for Javakhk. At first the Georgians were victorious: they invaded Somkhit (i.e. Armenia) and captured Armenian Prince Zareh near Lake Tseli (Tzovak Hyusiso, Cheldr). Soon, however, Artashes' sons Artavazd and Tigran led the Armenian army to Treghk, where they forced the enemy to sign an armistice securing Zareh's liberation and the restitution of entire Gugark to Armenia.

The period of the Artaxiad (189 B.C. to 1 A.D.) and Arshakid (66 to 428 A.D.) Dynasties is very poor in any mention of Javakhk. Information about the district can be obtained only in records relating to the whole province of Gugark. The latter kept its position as the northern defense province of Metz Hayk until the fall of the Arshakids in 428 A.D. It was not separated from the territory of the Armenian kingdom even in the first half of the 1st century A.D. (1 to 52), when the Armenian throne was also occupied by the Georgians among other foreigners.

Sparse as they are, the available sources on Javakhk comprise a record retaining highly valuable data about the ethnographic trends observed in the district. It is provided by a Georgian chronicler who states the following: as legend has it, Nino (Nune in Armenian sources), one of the sisters of the Hripsimian Order preaching Christianity, visited Javakhk on her way to Georgia. She met some shepherds on the shores of Lake Parvana and asked them in Armenian the way to Mtskhet.¹⁰ This episode clarifies two important issues: first, before visiting Virk (Georgia), Nino was in Armenia and learned Armenian. Then she, along with other preachers, introduced Christianity into Georgia.¹¹ Second, the spoken language of Javakhk was Armenian, which proves that the district was inhabited by

Armenians; otherwise, it would not be necessary for the shepherds from Mtskheta to learn Armenian.

It is notable that in the early 4th century, when Armenia (301 A.D.) and Georgia (320 to 330s A.D.) were being converted to Christianity, Gugark, along with Javakhk, retained its importance as one of the strongest vitaxates of the Armenian kingdom. Its governor, the vitaxa, who was called "the other vitaxa," enjoyed a special position and particular influence in the Armenian Royal Court. He was one of the 16 noblemen who were chosen by Trdat III the Great to escort St. Gregory, the future first Armenian Catholicos, to Caesarea, where he was to be ordained.¹² The vitaxa had his vassals, among whom can be distinguished the Vardzavuny nakharars (feudal lords) of Javakhk.¹³ Between the 3rd and 4th centuries, they retained their inner independence and occupied the 23rd place among the 70 nakharars of the *Gahnamak* (A royal decree listing the princes in order of their power and importance). In times of war, the Vardzavunies provided 200 soldiers for the Eastern army division of Armenia (on the whole, the country had four army divisions).¹⁴ Ghevond Alishan writes that this region, that formed part of Javakhk, was also known as *Vardzunik* and *Verdzarunik* (it was here that St. Mesrop placed the Vardzuni Cross).¹⁵ Alishan's statement is, perhaps, based on a legend reported by historian Vardan Bardzrberdtsi: according to it, "The cross, named after the Holy Virgin, was taken from Dpravan to Vardzunik, then called Joneats." The almighty cross, that was famous for its ability to cure all kinds of diseases, "had been blessed by St. Mesrop, or St. Barsegh from Joneats, and bore an Armenian inscription on its right wing."¹⁶

After the partition of Armenia in 387, the Arshakids' influence over Gugark and Javakhk considerably weakened. After the collapse of the Armenian Arshakid Kingdom in 428, these territories were annexed to the Georgian state, which was a subject of the Sassanid Kingdom of Persia (Iran). Although Georgia represented a simple marzpanutyun, it was still considered a vitaxate.

After the fall of the Arshakid Dynasty, the Armenian Apostolic Church retained its influence over Georgia, despite the fact that the latter was attempting to acquire certain independence.

With the temporary weakening of Tzunda, Zresk became the spiritual center of Javakhk.

The district of Javakhk is again mentioned in the mid-7th century in connection with the Arab invasions. Contemporary historian Hovhan Mamikonian writes in *The History of Taron* that Arab commander "...Abdrahim led his army through Hayk, Basen, Virk, Javakhk and Vanand, where he collected taxes and returned to Arabia."¹⁷

Another source reports almost the same with regard to this event, "Abdrahim, Mahmet's cousin, attacked Armenia with an army of eighty thousand troops...and passed through Hayk, Basen, Virk, Javakhk, and Vanand..."¹⁸ What is most important about this record is that it mentions Javakhk together with the Armenian district of Vanand and does not connect it with Virk, a fact which indicates that between the '40s and '50s of the 7th century, the district was part of not Virk, but Armenia. It was occupied and annexed to the Arab Caliphate only at the end of the century.

Javakhk suffered the Arab domination for nearly a century, until the early part of the 9th century. Artavazd Mamikonian's attack on the Arab tax collectors in Kumayri (Gyumri) instigated a rebellion in Javakhk in 774. Historian Ghevond testifies that the Armenian mutineers, escaping the pursuit of the regular Arab army, left Shirak for the district of Samtskhe (undoubtedly, via Javakhk - A. M.), which was a subject of Virk. Thence they moved to the Yegers' Land, where they were free of persecution, since the territory belonged to the Byzantine Empire.¹⁹ This suggests that Shirak and, probably, its northwestern neighbor Javakhk were still under Arab domination, while Samtskhe was part of the Georgian state.

The circumstances of Javakhk's liberation were as follows: after Nerseh Kamsarakan's murder (785 A.D.), Prince Ashot Bagratid the Carnivorous, who had committed himself to the restitution of the

Armenian territories from the Arabs, purchased Arsharunik and Shirak from the prince's descendants and thus approached the borders of Javakhk. In the early 9th century, while escaping the pursuit of Arab Commander Khalil, who had invaded Georgia, the troops of Ashot Kyurapaghat reached Lake Parvana. The enemy army, that soon arrived there, suffered a total defeat by Ashot's troops.²⁰ We are of the opinion that the Ashot Bagratid, mentioned in the account of this event found in Kartlis Tskhovreba, is the same Ashot the Carnivorous, who was declared Prince of Princes of Armenia (the Greatest Prince) in 804. This means that after the victory won at the battle of Parvana, Javakhk presumably became part of the territories of the Armenian Bagratids for a while.

In the '40s of the 9th century,²¹ historian Asoghik wrote the following about Javakhk and one of its oldest Armenian-named villages, Khozabir, "In the year 841 A.D., Khalt ibn Yezid (Khalt the son of Yezid) Prince of Armenia passed through Virk (Iberia) with a large multitude. He died in the village of Khozabir in Javakhk."²² Thus, just like Hovhan Mamikonian, this historian mentions Virk (Iberia) and Javakhk as two absolutely distinct geographical entities so that there are no grounds to claim that they were identical.

In the 9th century, Javakhk shifted back and forth amongst different rulers. At the end of the century, as testified by Hovhannes Draskhanakertsi, Armenian Bagratid King Smbat I (890 to 914) "moved towards Gugark and subjugated it."²³

Between the '70s and '80s of the 10th century, most of the province of Gugark constituted part of Lori or Kyurikian (Gugark, Dzoraget) Kingdom, while Verin Javakhk and, particularly, Gogshen, i.e. its southern part, remained under the Armenian Bagratids' influence for some time.

In the early 11th century, the Georgian Bagratids commenced founding defensive installations in Javakhk in order to strengthen their positions there. Bagrat III built and fortified a settlements which was called *Nor Kaghak* (New City), the name being equivalent to the Georgian word 'akhalkalak' ('akhali' is the Georgian equivalent for 'new,' and

'kalaki' is that for 'city'). In 1044 to 1047, during the war against Liparit Orbelian, Bagrat IV constructed the fort of Akhalkalak on the peninsula formed by the river Taparvan and its tributary Karasun Aghbyur (the Armenian equivalent for 'Forty Springs'). The place was inhabited by a certain number of Georgians who were forced to settle there.

In 1064 Armenia and Georgia were subjected to the Seljuk incursions. Sultan Alp-Arslan occupied Akhalkalak amongst other Transcaucasian cities. The Armenian sources of the 12th to 14th centuries contain a great amount of valuable information relating to this event.

Thus, Matthew of Edessa says, "...he encamped in the district called Jawakhk' and vehemently besieged the town of Akhalk'alak. By a violent assault he captured Akhalk'alak and mercilessly slaughtered all the inhabitants with the sword down to the last man and woman, butchering all the priests, monks, and nobles. The whole town was filled with blood, and the Turks led innumerable young boys and girls into captivity to Persia; moreover, they took [with them] treasures of gold, silver, precious stones, and pearls, amounting to an incalculable sum."²⁴

It is clear that Akhalkalak, which had replaced Tzunda as the administrative center of the district in the mid-11th century, lost a considerable part of its population as a result of the widespread slaughter and deportation. The aforementioned quotation clearly shows that at that time it represented a rich, flourishing, and populous city, inhabited by a great number of princes and clergymen.

Sharing the fate of the other districts, Javakhk suffered the domination of different rulers throughout the 12th century. In August 1175, the troops of Yeldkuz, the sultan-atabek of Gandzak, raided Javakhk and Treghk. Georgi III (1156 to 1184) escaped confrontation and did not repel the advancing Seljuk army.²⁵ Having destroyed Ani and Shirak, Yeldkuz "...similarly devastated Akhalkaghak and Javakhet and returned to Dvin, where he and many of his high ranking people died."²⁶ As testified by the historian of Queen Tamara (1184 to 1213), it was only in the late 12th century that the territory extending from

Javakhk to Sper was subjected to Georgian dominion thanks to the victory the brothers Zakare and Ivane Zakarian had won against the Seljuks.²⁷

With the Georgian Bagratids strengthening their reign in the 12th to early 13th centuries, new groups of ethnic Kartvels (Georgians) professing the Georgian confession (a branch of Orthodoxy) penetrated into Javakhk.²⁸ This occurred not only in Akhalkalak but also in those districts of Northern Armenia which had appeared in the sphere of influence of the Georgian kingdom as a result of the Armeno-Georgian military cooperation. However, Lori, Samtskhe-Akhaltskha, Taush, the districts adjacent to Sevan as well as Javakhk remained mostly Armenian-populated. It is not accidental that the Georgian court gave these territories to the Armenian Zakarians, who established their own principality.

The historian of Queen Tamara writes that the governors of Javakhk were Sargis "the Long-Armed" Tmogveli (Tmogvetsi) and Shalva Toreli (Toretsi). The former resided in Tmogvi (the Armenian fort of Tmuk or Tmka), situated in the gorge of the river Kur, not far from Tzunda. The latter's seat was in Tor Village situated in the north of Javakhk (the inhabitants of Tor were under the domination of the Zakarians). This implies that Javakhk maintained its former administrative division. According to Stepanos Orbelian,²⁹ the princes residing in Tmkaberd were called *Javakhuls*. Akhalkalak, which was the administrative and economic center of the entire district, enjoyed some sort of city autonomy.

In the mid-'20s of the 13th century, Javakhk was raided by Jalal ad-Din, a Central Asian ruler, whose invasions were followed by those of the Mongols in the '30s.³⁰ However, the Zakarians retained their autonomy in several districts, including Javakhk. In 1245, by new administrative partition, Javakhk was left to the Tori people under the control of the Mongols. In 1266, taking advantage of the conflict between the Georgian kings and the Mongols, Sargis Jaghetsy, the master of the fort of Tmuk, established the large principality of Samtskhe, which covered the territory from Tashir to Erzurum, including Javakhk. The prince of the region

bore the title of *Atabek*, his principality being called *Saatabago*, i.e. 'Subject to Atabek.' In Armenian sources, it is known as *Ishkhanats Yerkir (Land of Princes)*.³¹ Javakhk enjoyed socio-economic, political, and cultural development within this principality. This particularly refers to the cities of Tmogvi and Akhalkalak, which experienced great cultural rebirth. This is also attested by some cross-stones recently found in the site of the latter: one of them retains a fragmented inscription dated 1289.³²

In Akhalkalak in 1291, under the reign of Amirspasalar (Commander) Shahnshah, an Armenian church was built by a certain Korgi (Gorgi, Gevorg). An inscription carved on the western wall of Ani's Vimadzor Church and found by Hovsep Orbeli confirms this: «Կամա (ւն) ...ԱՅ. Պարոնութեան արապակ ամիրսպասալար Շահնշահի եւ Քորգի կենայկից իմ սթէւ կատա(րե)ցար մեր հալալ արդ(եան)ց գէկէդեց(իս).....Ախէլքադաքի(իս)(թուին) ՉԽ: Սարգիս»: ³³ (transl.: "By the Lord's will, under the rule of Atapak Amirspasalar Shahnshah, I, Korgi, [and] my spouse Stes founded the church of Akhelkaghak with our honestly-earned means in the year 1291. Sargis").

It is interesting to note that an inscription of the late 13th century mentions the Armenian version of the name of the city as "Kaghak."

Many researchers who consider the Meskh tribe of Samtskhe an Armeno-Kartvelian, or purely Armenian ethnic group, view the foundation of this principality as "a manifestation of the Meskhetians' willfulness,"³⁴ i.e. a formation of a state on the basis of national identity. This principality, set up in the north and northwest of Armenia, mainly consisted of Armenians. Until the early 14th century, it paid a certain amount of taxes to the Mongols. From the 14th until the 15th centuries, the principality struggled against Kartli, Timur, and his successors, i.e. the Timurians, as well as the Turkoman Koyunlu tribes. It maintained its independence until 1535. Beka I in the late 13th and his son Sargis II in the 14th centuries forced the Georgian kings to grant them the titles of Atabek and recognize the full independence of that principality. The kings of Kartli occasionally succeeded in exerting certain influence over

Samtskhe-Saatabago and donating some of its lands to the church. The first volume of the Collected Acts, published by the famous Archaeological Commission, includes the Russian translation of a donation certificate issued by the kings of Kartli: it enumerates the settlements granted to the church, including Javakhk, Tregkh, and Samtskhe. This document is thought to date from 1398 to 1498, or the 14th to 15th centuries. It retains the names of a number of settlements of the time some of which are mentioned for the first time: Karmir (Red) Church (Kizilkilisa - A. M.) and Beshkenashen (probably, Bash Dash) in Trialet; Poka near Lake Parvana; the villages of Gokia (Kokia), Alastan, Zemo Gomi (probably, Verin Gom or Goman) and Hokam in Akhalkalak District; Tolosh Village on the bank of the Kur; and Tzinuban in Akhaltskha.³⁵

The aforementioned as well as many other sources reveal that the region comprised numerous settlements, which attests that it lived a prosperous socio-economic life. An unknown 14th-century Georgian chronicler writes that Beka II, Sargis II's successor, conquered a great number of villages and many districts.³⁶ In the days of the Bagratids as well as the Zakarians, and their descendants, i.e. the Jaghetsies, Javakhk and the other districts under the atabek's reign enjoyed considerable cultural development. The living proof of this are the numerous monuments of Armenian architecture and, particularly, the khachkars (cross-stones) preserved in Akhalkalak City, Fort Tmuk as well as Orja, Chamdura, Murjakhet, Kokia, Kulikam, Diliska, Kartzakh, and other villages. Some of these cross-stones are dated and trace back to the period between 1289 and 1516.³⁷ A gravestone found in the fortress town of Akhalkalak bears the dates 1294, 1362, and 1451.³⁸ The oldest of the cross-stones found in Javakhk was erected in 1072. The district also boasts other monuments attributed to the 13th to 15th centuries.

Akhaltskha, which was the residence of the atabeks, became a great spiritual and cultural center for the local Armenian population, with many Armenian churches functioning there. St. Hovhannes Mkrtych (St. John the Baptist), one of the oldest churches, bears an Armenian inscrip-

tion dated 1298 on its tympanum. The second church is Sourb Astvatzatzin (Holy Mother of God), built in 1356 and repaired by an Armenian named Vache in 1442. Brossen, an expert on Georgian studies who conducted investigation into the cross-stones set in the walls of Sourb Nshan Church (also known as *Yerevman Sourb Khach*, i.e. *Church of the Apparition of the Holy Cross*), read and copied Armenian inscriptions dated 1451, 1454, 1475, and 1491. He also found a tombstone dated 1478 in the courtyard of the same church. Furthermore, Brossen found inscriptions tracing back to 1641, 1691, and a later period in Sourb Khach (Holy Cross) Church of Ivlicitya, a suburb in the city.³⁹ This historical monument was built by the prosperous Armenians of the Mepissian Family.

L. Melikset Bek is another scholar attesting to the existence of inscriptions dated 1351, 1356, 1442, 1451, and 1511 on the walls of the Armenian churches of Akhaltskha.⁴⁰ A manuscript confirms that in 1473 the city was the residence of Armenian Bishop Gregory, who was "the Primate of Samtskhe."⁴¹ This implies that Samtskhe was a separate diocese and, presumably, represented Javakhk after the weakening of Tzunda's diocesan position.

Armenologist P. Hakobian writes, "Akhaltskha Diocese ... traditionally belonged to Echmiatzin and was under the auspices of Catholicos of All Armenians. The Supreme Pontiff was entitled to send his representative clergymen to attend to the diocesan affairs for 3 to 5 years."⁴²

Akhaltskha was also a center of manuscript writing, where a great number of Armenian gospels and colophons were created. One of the preserved colophons which dates back to 1396 mentions Amir Sargis and his family members as the benefactors of the gospel. It also gives the name of the local atabek as well as spiritual leaders Hakobos and Nerses.⁴³ Another colophon reads, "The holy gospel was written in Mr. Hakob's monastery, Akhaltskha District, in the year 1438 A.D."⁴⁴

The colophons dating from the first two decades of the 17th century mention two priests as scribes: Fathers Makandar and Simon "from the capital of Akhaltskha." The latter also testifies to the existence of a local

zhamatun (a large vestibule in Armenian churches, often standing separately, also used for burials) and the church of Sourb Nshan.⁴⁵

Beginning with the 15th century, Javakhk became a theater of incursions of various invaders. Northwestern Armenia did not escape the disastrous attacks of the Timurians and Turkoman tribes, that subjected Akhaltskha to plunder and devastation at the beginning of the century. Contemporary historian Tovma Metzopetsi writes, "And they moved to Akhaltskha City where they gathered the Christian infants, both Armenian and Georgian, ... and the victims' bones were taken to their mosque and thrown there."⁴⁶ A few years later, in 1416, the city suffered another disaster by Kara Yusuf, the leader of the Black Sheep Turkomans (Kara Koyunlus) who slaughtered numerous men and "... captured the women and children, all of them totaling more than 6,000 souls. The whole country was wailing and the entire nation was imbued with despair, wondering as to why God had subjected his flock to the barbarities of the infidels."⁴⁷ It took many years to restore the region to its former state. In 1444 and 1448, Jhanshen, the leader of the Black Sheep Turkomans, subjected the population of Akhaltskha to deportation.⁴⁸ In 1484 the region was burnt down and demolished by the troops of Persian Khan Yaghub, who slaughtered and deported its population.⁴⁹ Thus, the days of Samtskhe were not marked by any stability. As a result of various invasions, part of the region's population was massacred, whereas many others were forced to emigrate. Despite this, however, the local people maintained their Christian and ethnic features, and the Muslim inhabitants remained as small a minority as before. Soon the region suffered the raids of the Ottoman Turks and Safavid Persians, this resulting in new demographic displacements.

Conquering a number of territories in the western coastal areas of Asia Minor and the Balkans, the Ottoman Empire expanded its occupation policy into the east of Asia Minor. Thus, after defeating the Ak Koyunlu (White Sheep) Turkoman tribes at the battle of Derjan in 1473, they invaded the western districts of Armenia. In the early 16th century, an intense rivalry ensued between the Ottoman Empire and Safavid

Persia for domination in Armenia and Transcaucasia. On the other hand, the kings of partitioned Georgia, instead of forming a united front against the Turko-Persian forces, began to struggle for control over the northeastern districts of Samtskhe, including Javakhk. Thus, in 1535 Kings Bagrat III of Imeret and Luarsab I of Kartli, with the assistance of the ruler of Guria, defeated the troops of the atabek of Samtskhe near Murjakhet Village of Javakhk and occupied Akhalkalak and Akhaltskha. In this way, these cities and the adjacent territories temporarily shifted into the control of Imeret.

In 1545 the Ottoman Turks conquered the region and appointed Kaykhosro, probably, a descendant of one of the local princely families, as Governor of the subjugated territories. Two years later, in 1547, assisted by Turkey's archenemy, the Persian Safavids, he revolted against the Ottomans and gained independence. In 1549 the large Turkish army succeeded in suppressing the rebellion after a bloody struggle that lasted one and a half months. In 1555 Turkey and Persia signed an armistice according to which Javakhk passed to Persia, and Samtskhe to the Ottoman Empire.

In 1578 the Turko-Persian war was resumed, and the Turks again invaded Samtskhe and Javakhk. Defeating the Persians at the bloody battle of Cheldr, they took possession of Samtskhe Principality, the castles of Cheldr, Akhaltskha, Akhalkalak, Khertvis as well as some other fortresses.⁵⁰ The locals having accepted Islam, the conquerors allowed them to continue holding the post of atabek. In this regard, Injijian writes, "Some of the local Georgian princes who converted to Islam were granted the right to hereditary dominion in this district (Akhaltskha - A. M.)."⁵¹ In August 1582, the Turkish army stationed in Erzurum moved to Javakhk via Kars. In Akhalkalak they were joined by the army of Prince Manuchar (Mustafa Pasha), who had converted to Islam, and advanced towards Tiflis with united forces.⁵²

In 1639, by the armistice of Kasr-e-Shirin signed between the Ottomans and Persia, the Turks forcibly put entire Western Armenia, Akhaltskha, and Akhalkalak under their control. As early as the 17th cen-

ture, Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak had been part of the newly-established vilayet of Cheldr (later Akhaltskha). The territory of Historical Javakhk was partitioned into several self-governing districts having the status of liva-sanjaks, their centers being Akhalkalak, Khertvis, and Kenarbel. This marked the beginning of a long and dreadful period of Turkish domination in the region.

According to the Great Davtar of Gyurjistan Vilayet, a Turkish tax list dating from the period between the late 1580s and 1595, Cheldr Province had 9 liva-districts: Akhaltskha, Khertvis, Akhalkalak, Cheldr, Potskhov, Petre, Panak (Penek, Banak), Metz (Greater) Artahan, and Olti, all of them encompassing 37 nahies, i.e. groups of villages;⁵³ more than 1,250 settlements as well as other sites of income, i.e. lakes and rivers for fish industry, mills, gardens, etc. The territory of Javakhk mainly included the districts of Akhalkalak, Khertvis, and Cheldr.

The lists of taxpayers provided by the Great Davtar indicate that most of the inhabitants of Javakhk and the adjacent districts were Christians whose names were either of Armenian origin, or represented common names normally used by the Armenians and Georgians.⁵⁴ It is interesting to note that there were villages which were almost entirely populated by the Armenians; thus, only very few non-Armenian names were found in Orja, Yerin (Upper) Orja, and Korkh Villages. This fact is substantiated even now by the numerous cross-stones preserved particularly in the vicinity of Orja. Samvel Karapetian studied 12 khachkars seven of which are engraved with Armenian inscriptions. Three of them are dated and go back to 1463 to 1465.⁵⁵

The same demographic features were characteristic of the famous fortress town of Tmuk (Tmogvi), where one comes across the following Armenian names:

- Sargis the son of Arakel; Rostom; Anania's son; his brother Mkrtych; Vardan's son; Yedigaryan's son; Hovhannes the son of Bayandur; Papu the son of Shirin; Berik the son of Piraziz; his son Mkrtych; Murad; Father Hakob; Berik the son of Murad; his brother Margaryan; Hakob; Sargis the son of Melik.

Kenarbel (Kanarbel) Village of Cheldr District was entirely inhabited by the Armenians:

- Tzaruk's son; his brother Asva/tza/tur; Margar's son; Ghulijan's son Norses (Nerses); Khosik-Husik; Rostom's son; Sargis the son of Mukhtar; Mikirtich the son of Velijan; Mitich's son; his brother Sargis; Murad the son of Karapet; Martiros the son of Avanes; Hovhannes the son of Amiraziz; his brother Karapet; Khachik the son of Hambardzum.

Tornik Tzaruk refers to Mragval Village, whose inhabitants bore names like Asva(tza)tur, etc.

Metz (Greater) Kartzakh and Pokr (Smaller) Kartzakh Villages of the district had a large Armenian population, too:

- Nadar the son of Shahnazar; Vardan; Grigor the son of Sukias; Jhanshe the son of Kirakos; Mkrtych's son; his brother Vardzel; Bayandur; Khachik the son of Yaral; Sahak's son; Anton's son; Father Hakob the son of Jomerd; his son Shahaziz; Yaraziz the son of Ter-Hakob; Sargis; Asva/tza/tur; Diarbek the son of Sahak; his brother Asva/tza/tur.

Sulda: Shermazan's son Simon; Erinja (Yernjak): Yeghiazar's son Manas; Khozabun, situated on the western banks of Lake Khozabun or Khozabin: Manuk Asva/tza/tur; Tzegharostav: Ayvaz's son Shahum; his brother Shirin; Sahak's son Kirakos; Avag; Paronvard; Khachatur.

Special mention should be made of the frequent use of names like Father Hakob and Father Bek. This testifies to the presence of Armenian priests in the given villages, which in its turn attests that they had Armenian parishes and churches. The name of Paronvard in Tzegharostav is of particular interest, too: it should be understood as 'Paron Vard,' i.e. Mister Vard, most presumably, implying Landlord.

Throughout the 17th to 18th centuries, as a result of emigration, mass slaughters, forced conversion to Islam, and the penetration of Turkish-speaking ethnic elements, the number of Muslims considerably increased both in the entire province of Akhaltskha and the districts of Javakhk (they were known by the collective geographical name of *Meskhethian*). The processes of the Georgianization and conversion of the Armenians to

Catholicism particularly intensified in the 18th century, when the province became the theater of the northern incursions of the Caucasian highlanders.

In order to struggle against Georgia on one hand, and avoid the Lezghins' (a mountain-dwelling people from North Caucasia) raids on the other, the pashas of Akhaltskha started hiring the highlanders for military service. The sultan's government paid large sums of money to the looting khans, thus encouraging their move towards Akhaltskha, whence they could easily attack Georgia. In a short time, the province turned into a busy site for trafficking: kidnapped Russian girls from the regions of Don and North Caucasia as well as Georgians and representatives of other nationalities were being sold there.

In order to punish the Lezghins, the Georgian kings invaded and depredated the villages of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak, capturing the local inhabitants and, particularly, the Christians. With this regard, the Georgian annals read, "The Turks and Lezghins came from Akhalkalak and devastated Kartli, in response to which, the Georgians came from Kartli and ruined Akhaltskha and Javakhetia. Thus, both countries were subjected to continual destruction and demolition, the people being able to live only in fortresses and other impregnable places."⁵⁶

To escape the devastation inflicted by the highlanders as well as the Turkish and Persian powers, the Georgian kings attempted to strengthen their ties with Russia. During the Russo-Turkish war of 1768, the Russian diplomacy succeeded in involving Georgian King Heraclius II in the military conflict against the Ottoman Empire. The Georgian court joined in the conflict with the aim of re-capturing Akhaltskha Eyalet.

In 1769 a small Russian regiment led by General Tottleben entered Georgia. In April of the following year, they joined the Georgian troops in the siege of Fort Atzghur. The hostilities were a complete failure because of the Russians' indecisiveness. In spite of that, however, on April 20, 1771, King Heraclius II's army defeated the Turks at the battle of Aspindza and seized Fort Khertvis. In 1772 Heraclius II and King Solomon of Imeret surrounded the fort of Akhalkalak, but the latter's

unexpected illness forced them to lift the siege. Some of the Christians living in the vicinity fell victim to the fighting. Taking "vengeance" for his fiasco, Heraclius II plundered the villages adjacent to Akhalkalak, Akhaltskha, and Ardahan and returned to Georgia with a great number of captives.

After the conclusion of the Treaty of Georgievsk (1783), when Georgia consented to be a protectorate of Russia, the Tsarist Government's policy became more active in Transcaucasia. The Russian court attempted to win over the administrative areas under Turkish control, particularly the pashalic of Akhaltskha, which was semi-independent of the sultan. On May 22, 1784, the Russian ambassador residing in Tiflis visited Suleyman Pasha of Akhaltskha, but his efforts to make Akhaltskha Eyalet a protectorate of Russia met with failure. The Sublime Porte succeeded in keeping the pasha of Akhaltskha away from Russia's influence by presenting him with expensive gifts and granting him new privileges. Moreover, he was commissioned to lead the struggle against Russian encroachments by uniting all the forces of the region and utilizing the North-Caucasian highlanders. Turkish scholar Cevdet writes that the sultan, in order to counteract the Treaty of Georgievsk, ordered Suleyman, the Pasha of Cheldr (Akhaltskha), "...to be vigilant and use every possible means to win over the Daghestan peoples, known for their religious fanaticism, bravery and virility, and deliver to their leaders the gifts and imperial certificates of merit sent from the capital, thus calling upon them to jihad, i.e. a holy war."⁵⁷

Under the Ottoman domination, some Catholic Armenians, in order to escape religious and ethnic persecution, received certain assistance from the Pope of Rome and European countries, and were temporarily saved from conversion to Islam and Georgianization. This also helped them escape the incursions of the highlanders and retain many of their Armenian characteristics. It is thus understandable why in the 18th century, the Catholic Armenians were a majority in the totally deserted and ruined district of Akhaltskha, where they had an independent Catholic Diocese with its priesthood and bishop's residence.⁵⁸

In the late 18th century, most of the Catholic Armenians lived in the fortress town of Akhaltskha. Injijian says, "In general, Akhaltskha has a population of 30,000 houses (this should be understood as 30,000 individuals - A. M.), including Turks, Georgians and Armenians who are larger in number than the Georgians."⁵⁹ It is obvious that the "Turks" included very few people of Turkish origin; their number had grown and they had become a majority only on account of the Georgian and Armenian converts. The Armenians, as already mentioned, were far more in number than the Georgians. Injijian, who was a member of the Armenian Catholic Congregation of the Mkhitarists, understandably found it unnecessary to stress the Catholic faith of these Armenians; it was their Armenian identity that was prioritized in his work. During that period, Ivilita (adjacent to Akhaltskha and, actually, one of its quarters) and Khezabavra were the only towns purely inhabited by Armenians who constituted 100 houses in the latter. In contrast to them, Nakalakev in Javakhk, and Valen, Aral. Ude, Abastuman, and others in the vicinity of Akhaltskha had mixed populations of Armenians and Georgians.⁶⁰ Injijian mentions only 47 settlements in the sub-districts of Akhaltskha, Khertvis, Koblian, and Adigen, which once boasted hundreds of them.

The situation was more disastrous in Javakhk: having appeared in the very center of anti-Armenian ethnic processes, it looked abandoned and devastated. The populations of Nakalakev and Khezabavra had adopted Catholicism, while Kotelia and a number of other villages had been subjected to frequent deportations. It is not accidental that speaking of the once populous region of Javakhk in the late 18th century, Injijian mentioned Khrtz (i.e. Khertvis) only as a "village near yakhal" (Akhalkalak - A. M.), and "Paravan" or "Parevan" as "a village surrounded by mountains and lakes called after its name."⁶¹ It was only the fortress town of Akhalkalak that remained in a good state, thanks to its ramparts and impregnability. As Injijian writes, "It has an inaccessible fort and a population of 600 houses inhabited by Armenians and Georgians."⁶² Akhalkalak, however, did not enjoy these conditions for a long time: the city suffered great damage in the aftermath of the Russo-Turkish wars.

Thus, it is obvious how disastrous the Ottoman yoke was for the ethno-religious make-up of both the Armenian and Georgian populations of the region who found themselves in the grave danger of assimilation. Unfortunately, these processes also continued in the first quarter of the 19th century, resulting in a drastic change in the demographic make-up of the region.

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- 44 ԺԵ դարի հայերեն ձեռագրերի հիշատակարաններ, կազմեց Լ. Ս. Խաչիկյան, գիրք առաջին (1401-1450), Ե. (Colophons of the Armenian Manuscripts of the 15th century. Compiled by Khachikian, L. S. Book 1 (1401 to 1450, Yerevan), 1955, p. 486:
- 45 Հայերեն ձեռագրերի ԺԷ դարի հիշատակարաններ (1601-1620), հ.Ա, կազմեցին Վ. Հակոբյան, Ա. Հովհաննիսյան, Ե. (Colophons of the Armenian Manuscripts of the 17th century, vol. 1 (1601 to 1620). Compiled by Hakobian, V., Hovhannissian, A. Yerevan), 1974, pp. 262, 687:
- 46 **Թովմա Մեծոփեցի**, Պատմագրություն, աշխատասիրությանը Լ. Խաչիկյանի, Ե. (Historiography by **Tovma Metzopetsy**. Prepared by Khachikian, L. Yerevan), 1999, p. 127:
- 47 *Idem*, pp. 236-237.
- 48 **Ջաքարեայ սարկաւազի Պատմութիւն**, հ. Ա, Վաղարշապատ (History by **Zechariah Sarkavag**, vol. 1, Vagharshapat). 1870, p. 4; Brief Chronicle, vol. 2, p. 515; **Ալիշան**, Այրարատ (Alishan. Ararat, p. 2):
- 49 **Erpikian, H. S.** An Illustrated Encyclopedia, vol. 1, p. 62.
- 50 Turkish Sources..., vol. 1, pp. 35-37.
- 51 **Injijian**, *idem*, pp. 124-125.
- 52 **Ջուլալյան Մ.**, Հայ ժողովրդի 13-18-րդ դարերի պատմության հարցերը ըստ եվրոպացի հեղինակների, գիրք Ա. Ե. (Zulalian, M. The Questions of the Armenian History of the 13th to 18th centuries according to European Researchers, book 1, Yerevan), 1990, p. 128:
- 53 The Great Register of Gyurjistan Vilayet, book 2, pp. 7-21, 332-386, 393-402.
- 54 See **Melklonian, A.** Javakhk: Outlines of History, pp. 13-14 for the list of the Armenian taxpayers as per the villages of Javakhk in the late 16th century.
- 55 **Karapetian, S.** The Cross-Stones of Javakhk. p. 9.
- 56 **Rostomov, I. P.**, *idem*, p. 18.
- 57 **Tarih Cevdet**, c. III, s. 149. We have followed M. Zulalian's translation while refer-

ring to the aforementioned quotation. Չոլալյան Մ. Կ., Արևմտյան Հայաստանը 16-18-րդ դդ., Ե. (Zulalian, M. K. Western Armenia Between the 16th and 18th centuries. Yerevan), 1980, p. 127.

- 58 **Iakobian, P.** Armenian Catholicism in Critical Historical Light. In: "Hraver Voghjtutian." pp. 83-84.
- 59 **Injijian, Gh.** Geography of the Four Parts of the World, vol. 1, p. 124.
- 60 *Idem*, p. 125. By "mixed" villages. Injijian implies not only those having both Armenian and Georgian population but also those populated by the Armenians and Georgianized people.
- 61 *Idem*, p. 127.
- 62 *Ibid*.

CHAPTER TWO

JAVAKHK AND THE FOREIGN POLICY OF RUSSIA

AKHALKALAK DISTRICT WITHIN THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE (BETWEEN 1801 AND 1917)

Akhaltskha Province and Akhalkalak District During the Russo-Turkish Wars in the First Thirty Years of the 19th century. The Great Resettlement of the Western Armenians in 1830

After the serious military and diplomatic actions implemented in the late 18th century, it was only in the early 19th century that the Russian Empire intensified its Eastern policies, aiming to establish permanent domination in Transcaucasia. The incorporation of Eastern Georgia into Russia in 1801 was a successful beginning of that policy. The Russian state thus obtained an important stronghold for expanding its influence in the region. The territory of Kartli-Kakhetia as well as a number of districts of Northern Armenia bordering on Akhaltskha Vilayet of the Ottoman Empire, and the Persian khanates of Eastern Transcaucasia provided a great opportunity for the subsequent intensification of the occupation policy of the Tsarist Government.

In December of 1806, a war ensued between Russia and Turkey. It was only in early May 1807 that the Russian troops crossed the new Russo-Turkish border to the north of Lake Parvana. This was the first Russian penetration into a region that was completely unknown to them, i.e. Akhalkalak Sanjak of Akhaltskha Vilayet. On May 23, General Ivan Gudovich sent a circular to the pasha of Akhaltskha and the local officials

revealing his ungrounded confidence in his forces and his underestimation of the enemy's. It particularly stated that with the blessing of the Tsarist Empire, the invincible Russian army would invade the enemy land, ready to subjugate it by force. Those accepting Russian citizenship without any resistance would be assured to have security of life and property, whereas the disobedient would be severely punished.¹ On May 5, the Russians arrived at Akhalkalak Fort without encountering any resistance.

Taking advantage of Gudovich's slow movements, a 1,500-soldier garrison consisting of Turks and the Laz managed to move their families to Akhaltskha, accumulate the necessary ammunition and prepare to resist. A considerable part of the population retreated to the left bank of the river Kur and the mountainous villages.

Gudovich camped southeast of Akhalkalak Fort, in the fields lying between the rivers Taparvan and Karanaghbyur. The Russian troops were exhausted and had lost their fighting ability. Moreover, the severe climatic conditions had rendered most of them ill. Suffice it to say that the infantry included only 2,900 healthy warriors. In spite of this, however, Gudovich had no other alternative but to attack the fort. Receiving no reply to their proposal to surrender without any armed conflict, the Russian artillery started bombing Akhalkalak, which proved of no significant results: the ramparts did not suffer heavy damage, nor did any conflagration break out in the city, since most of the houses and huts were either underground or made of stone and brick so that the artillery fire could not pose any danger to them. Thus, these military actions did not produce the expected psychological influence on the garrison of the fort.

In answer to this, the Turks launched a counterattack of bombardment. They even attempted to advance out of the fort: moving alongside the river Taparvan, they attacked the right wing of the Russian army. However, suffering heavy casualties, they retreated. Gudovich presented another stern written proposal to the garrison commandant reminding him of the privileges waiting for those who would surrender without a

fight. Instead of replying to this, the Turks resumed bombing the Russian positions.

The bloody battle lasted for about 5 hours: the Russians were unsuccessful in their attempts to crush the city gates with heavy artillery. The Turks by their artillery fire were able to kill the gunner and the horses, thus defusing the danger. The enemy, who was fighting in utter despair, suddenly detonated the gunpowder previously stored in the tower occupied by the Russians, killing a great number of Russian soldiers. This incident further intensified the confusion amongst the young Russian soldiers: the number of casualties, dead and wounded, gradually increased, amounting to 1,500 to 2,000. To escape final crushing defeat, Gudovich ordered his troops to withdraw, taking along the bodies of thousands of the killed and injured Russian soldiers. The Turks captured the heavy artillery located within 40 paces of the gates.

In utter despair after his defeat, Gudovich, in his report to the Tsar, confessed bitterly, "...while withdrawing, I stationed my troops in the same camp where I had been earlier, and realizing that the army had suffered heavy casualties and was reduced in numbers, I was convinced that it was impossible to renew the attack." Pleading for the Tsar's pardon, he added, "Contrary to my greatest desire to be useful to Your Imperial Majesty, success turned away from me."²

In 1810 the Persians and Turks attempted to cooperate in their struggle against the Russians, and Javakhk became the battlefield of their actions. To avert this, on September 4, a Russian detachment (2 battalions with a Cossack cavalry of 200) led by General F. Paulucci entered Javakhk Plateau from Gandza Village via the mountains of Abul-Samsar. On the morning of September 5, taking advantage of the rainy and foggy weather, the Russians, unnoticed, approached the Persian army stationed on the right bank of the river Taparvan, at a distance of several kilometers from Akhalkalak. General Paulucci divided his forces in two parts: Colonel Dmitri Lisanevich was ordered to attack the right wing of the Persian army, and Pechorski was to do the same with the left one. The Persian patrol noticed the Russians only at a distance of 100 sazhen (213

meters). The two Russian armed groups immediately opened fire, which was followed by bayonet fighting. The half-asleep Persian soldiers fled towards Akhalkalak hoping to find refuge behind the ramparts, with the Turks. They suffered new fatalities in the gorge of Taparvan while descending the slope. Obeying the order of Sherif Pasha, who was still in Akhaltskha, the garrison of Akhalkalak did not open the gates of the fort and responded only with irregular gunfire. Darkness did not permit the Turks to hit any targets, and the Russians did not suffer any losses: confusion and tumult grew even deeper in the Persian army.

Taking into account the numerical majority of the enemy and the nocturnal conditions of the attack, the Russian army leaders did not take any hostages, thus causing a great number of fatalities that comprised many high-ranking officials and military figures, including three khans among the 700 Persians killed.³ Hearing the very first gunshots, Husein Kuli Khan of Yerevan and Georgian Crown Prince Alexander immediately fled, thus escaping captivity. The rest of the Persians abandoned the district and headed towards Akhaltskha and Kars. The detachment of Maghasberd Bey suffered serious losses, too: 100 out of the 500 soldiers were killed. The Russians captured a vast amount of loot, including precious goods, about a thousand tents, as many horses, flags, etc.

At sunrise the gunfire from the fort became even better aimed. Paulucci ordered his troops to withdraw from the ramparts and camp in Ghaurma Village, south of the city.

The Armenians and Georgians of Javakhk rejoiced greatly over the defeat of the Turko-Persian forces: it was the first time they had witnessed such a defeat of the Muslims. This inspired them to support the Russian army with greater enthusiasm. Husein Ghuli Khan tried to justify his defeat before the Persian court by blaming Sherif Pasha, who had betrayed him. Indeed, the Sardar was right: postponing the unification of his troops with the Persian forces in Akhalkalak Fort for three weeks, the Pasha thus had compelled Husein Khan to station his army in the open field, devoid of any defense against the Russians. All this suggested that Sherif had aimed at freeing Transcaucasia from Russian influence by

using the Persian forces and without involving his own army. It is not incidental that he appeared on the battlefield only on September 6, when everything was over. Thus, the battle of September 5, 1810 put an end to the Turko-Persian military cooperation: moreover, a certain conflict grew between the two sides.

Faced with such an unfavorable military and political situation, Persian Crown Prince Abbas Mirza attempted to achieve peace with the Russian army leaders. Arriving in Yerevan from Nakhijevan, he sent a messenger to Armenian Catholicos Yeprem requesting him to intercede on his behalf for resuming the Russo-Persian negotiations. Without a doubt, this turn of events testified to the military and diplomatic success of Russia.

The battle of Akhalkalak shattered the plans of Georgia's Crown Prince Alexander and those of King Solomon of Imeret. The latter, who was fighting alongside a Turkish detachment, was defeated by General D. Simonovich's troops in the gorge of Borzhom on September 23. This compelled him to accept Russian domination in his country in October. Alexander, on the other hand, abandoned his crazy intention to invade Tiflis and continued his odyssey of being a fugitive, trying to find new allies against Russia.

The success of Akhalkalak Battle inspired General A. Tormasov to take more daring actions: encountering no objections on the part of the Russian Court, he decided to implement his predecessors,' i.e. P. Tsitsianov's and I. Gudovich's old plan of incorporating Akhaltskha Province into Russia. To carry out that bold plan, he was first to conquer the city of Akhaltskha (the seat of the Pasha), which had been the center of anti-Russian struggle in Transcaucasia and whence the king of Imeret, Georgian Prince Alexander, the Karapapaks, Turks, and Lezghin mercenaries had been waging wars. Early in November 1810, General Tormasov moved towards Akhaltskha. On November 18, his soldiers conquered an elevation of great strategic importance: it towered over the city and was called *Ghaya Pasha*, i. e. *Pasha's Rock*, in Turkish. The Turks attempted to recapture it and carried on a three-day desperate fight,

suffering 300 fatalities. The Russian army also suffered some losses, the fighting costing them 73 killed soldiers. On November 22, Akhaltskha was subjected to heavy bombardment, which caused a four-day conflagration there: almost all the wooden houses, including the Pasha's residence, were burnt down, numerous innocent civilians fell victim to it, and the Turkish artillery was totally ruined.

On the sixth day of the siege, however, a plague epidemic broke out in the Russian army. The Russian army leaders decided to terminate the siege, fearing that the infected Russian soldiers would inevitably enter into contact with the inhabitants of the city - once it was conquered - thus spreading the disease everywhere beyond control. This decision was also based on the fact that the morale and psychological state of the Russian soldiers were not at all favorable for the extension of the siege: the number of the fatalities was gradually increasing, while the promised aid from Selim Pasha failed to arrive. In addition, the news that some troops were coming from Erzurum to help those under siege was becoming more and more formidable.

On November 26, Tormasov ordered to withdraw the artillery and the troops from the ramparts of the fort. He permitted his 3,000-member militia and irregulars to loot the villages that had not been infected with plague. Most of these villages were located in Akhalkalak District: once again no distinction was made between the Armeno-Georgian and Muslim villages, and all of them were subjected to terrible plunder. According to some official Russian reports, in that way they "... compensated for all the losses inflicted on the inhabitants of Georgia's and Imeret's border regions by the Turkish and Lezghin invaders from Akhaltskha. Thus, by the rights of the war, the enemy was put in a state unable to cause (us - A. M.) any harm."⁴ The Russian army leaders did not confine themselves to looting and decided to subject the region to ethnic cleansing: through the efforts of the Georgian Mingrelian irregulars, 1,500 families from Akhaltskha Pashalic, including Christian Armenians and Georgians with their 50,000 head of cattle, were displaced and deported to Georgia.

These events suggest that Russia did not merely pursue military and political goals by its incursion of Akhaltskha: the Tsarist authorities wanted to return these territories to the enemy in a ruined and deserted state, regardless of their ethnic make up.

After his predecessor's failure, Lieutenant General Paulucci did not hesitate to cast the depressing impression of the invasion of Akhalkalak into oblivion through his audacious military operations. He had risen to great fame after the battle of September 4 to 5, 1810. The Turks and, particularly, the garrison of Akhalkalak, however, did not view the victory of the Russians over Persia as one gained over them. Moreover, they proudly declared that having won a victory over the Persians, the Russians were frightened and did not dare attack the fort, convinced that the fate of Gudovich's troops, who had suffered a crushing defeat in May 1807, awaited them. All these circumstances goaded the newly-appointed commander-in-chief to abolish the legend about the impregnability of Akhalkalak.

The conquest of Akhalkalak was of great importance to the Russians from another point of view: by taking possession of the strategically significant fort, they had a chance to include the issue of its incorporation into Russia in the upcoming Russo-Turkish peace treaty. The subsequent events convinced Paulucci even more that Javakhk should be occupied.

The invasion of Akhalkalak was prepared very rapidly, in utter secrecy, but very carefully. Two craftsmen were secretly commissioned to make siege ladders. To be unnoticed by the enemy, the troops had to be organized in small numbers: two battalions of Georgian grenadier units and a Cossack detachment of 100 people. The general command of this military detachment was entrusted to Pyotr Semyonovich Kotlyarevski, a brave colonel, who had often distinguished himself at the battles against the Persians and Turks earlier in the century.

On December 3, 1811, taking a battalion of his army unit, Kotlyarevski left Gori for the right bank of the river Kur, where he joined his second unit and moved towards Tzalka. To ensure rapid movement, he did not take heavy artillery and ammunition with him. The main arma-

ment of the small unit consisted of boxes filled with bullets and siege ladders carried by horses. The Russian soldiers overcame grave difficulties: it took them three days in heavy snow and a raging blizzard to cross the plateau and mountain range of Treghk. At dawn on December 7, they reached Akhaltskha Vilayet and stopped in a gorge within 25 versts (a Russian unit of distance equivalent to two thirds of a mile, so approximately 17 miles) of Akhalkalak Fort. All day long, they had to stay in their hiding-place to avoid being noticed by the Turks and the local inhabitants. It was only late on the evening of December 7 that they succeeded in approaching the city rapidly.

Kotlyarevski himself was the leader of the first column. Colonel Stepanov, the commander of the 16th chasseur unit, led the second one, and Lieutenant Colonel Ushakov the third. Each column comprised 200 grenadiers (soldiers armed with grenades) and 20 riflemen. A company was sent to two villages, probably, Diliska and Khulgumo, adjacent to the fort, while 3 small detachments, each consisting of 30 men, were to feign attacks in order to divert the enemy's attention from the main forces. As can be seen, the Russian detachment was going to conquer the fort with about 800 soldiers. Kotlyarevski's expectation for success was based on a sudden-attack plan, which would render any aid impossible for the 200-soldier Turkish garrison.

The Russian troops launched the general attack at 2 o'clock in the morning: their charge was so rapid and unexpected that the Muslim inhabitants of the neighboring villages could not take refuge in the fort. Carrying the siege ladders under enemy fire, via the bumpy gorge of Taparvan - both through the river and the bridge - the Russian warriors crossed to the left bank of the river.

Using their ladders, the Russians immediately began climbing the eastern ramparts of the fort: most of the half-awake sentinels who had been taken aback withdrew to the citadel without offering any serious resistance. By 3 o'clock, the Russians had occupied two enemy batteries. Fighting severely for another hour and a half, they conquered the citadel and the entire city. Most of the 200 janissaries of the garrison were killed,

and 47 taken captive. The conquerors took possession of the fort, which had remained intact, 15 cannon and several guns with their carts as well as 40 poods (*a Russian unit of weight equal to 16.3 kilograms, so approximately 650 kilograms*) of gunpowder and other ammunition. The Russian army suffered 27 casualties: one soldier was killed and 26 injured.⁵ Cossack leader Lieutenant Colonel Yezhov, Captain Shulten, Colonel Kotlyarevski and Staff Captain Saghinov, an Armenian in origin (Saghinian) who was heavily wounded, distinguished themselves greatly during the fighting.

For this serious victory the Georgian grenadier unit was awarded the Georgievski Flag with the following heading, "For the Conquest of Akhalkalak." A second-class order named after St. Vladimir was conferred on Paulucci, while Kotlyarevski was promoted to Major-General. Many officers and soldiers were awarded different medals and orders. Appreciating the feat of Kotlyarevski's unit, Paulucci called it "the first important step in the hostilities."⁶ By December 20, Kotlyarevski succeeded in taking possession of the entire district.⁷

The Tartar cavalry, that had entered Akhalkalak together with the Russians and actually represented a gang of bandits, subjected the local population to pillage, appropriating the food and property, instead of handing them over to the army.

The fort and district of Akhalkalak did not remain under Russian control for long: by the Russo-Turkish Peace Treaty signed in Bucharest on May 16, 1812, the Tsarist Government gave preference to the territories occupied in the Danube area. The Turks conceded Bukovina, and in exchange, the Russians returned Akhalkalak District, Anapa, and Poti to them. Indeed, nothing could justify this action, and the Russians were later compelled to renew their efforts to re-conquer the region.

After the conclusion of Bucharest Peace Treaty, when the fort and district of Akhalkalak were returned to Turkey, certain Christian groups from Javakhk left for Georgia together with the Russian army. At the same time, the Muslims who had retreated into the mountainous regions as well as some Turks and Lezghins from other districts settled down in

the villages belonging to these Christian emigrants. Thus, at the turn of the century, due to the military and political situation, certain ethnic displacements took place in Javakhk: the emigration and deportation of the Armenians and Georgians; the devastation of the local villages, and the immigration of the Turk-Meskhetians, as a result of which the district lost its ethnic make-up to even a greater extent.

Between 1828 and 1829, another war was fought between the Ottoman Empire and Russia. The conquest of the districts of Akhalkalak and Akhaltskha was placed high on the military agenda. After subjugating the fort of Kars on June 23, 1828, General Paskevich's troops moved north and, passing Lake Cheldr, advanced to Akhalkalak Plateau.

Crushing the fierce resistance of the garrison, the Russian army occupied Akhalkalak on July 24, 1828. This was followed by the conquest of the fort of Khertvis (Khertzi) on July 26, and the provincial center of Akhaltskha on August 15. Under the Treaty of Adrianople signed on September 2, 1829, Russia took possession of Akhalkalak and Akhaltskha Districts, where the hostilities had inflicted serious damage on the Armenian and Georgian settlements: most of them lay devastated since their inhabitants had emigrated.⁸ The Russian occupation of the district provided a good opportunity for some of these people to return and partly reconstruct their houses in villages such as Hokam, Baralet, Kokia, Gondura, Abul, Diliska, Majadia, and Aragova. At the end of the war in 1829, the district presented the following picture: 1,816 Armenian families (about 10,000 to 13,000 people, including 5,409 males); 639 Muslim ones, including 1,727 males, and 179 Georgian houses, including 710 males.⁹

Taking advantage of the opportunity provided by clause 13 of Adrianople Treaty, 58,000 Armenians from the district of Ardahan (in late 1829) as well as Erzurum, Basen, Khnus, and partly Derjan (in the summer of 1830) left their homes under the leadership of Archbishop Karapet Bagratuny and took up residence in the districts of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak.¹⁰

The Armenians of Erzurum reconstructed or founded about 50 villages in Akhalkalak together with the local people. In 1831 tens of Armenian

families from Akhaltskha founded a new large quarter in the southern part of Akhalkalak, which had been partially destroyed. Thus, the number of the Armenians of Javakhk increased with the arrival of the Western Armenians who, being a majority now, imposed the Western Armenian dialect, culture, and habits on the locals who, presumably, mainly spoke Eastern Armenian. The latter were called *Yerrli* or *Yerrlakan*.¹¹

The aforementioned immigration was a turning point for entire Transcaucasia as well as the semi-ruined districts of Akhalkalak and Akhaltskha: it marked a considerable increase in the number of the local Armenian population, whereby the region regained its ethnic make-up of earlier periods. Thus, the immigrants of Erzurum, who had resettled in Akhaltskha, founded a new large quarter opposite the old one, on the right bank of the river Potskhov, where extended vegetable gardens. The former residents of Akhaltskha, who were mostly Catholic Armenians and Jews, remained in the quarter of the fort, on the left bank of the river.

It is interesting that the immigrants tried to isolate themselves not only from the natives but also from their own countrymen, taking up residence only with the people who had come from the same places. Thus, over 800 Armenian families from Baberd, led by their leader Baberdtsy, wanted to live in the old quarter of Akhaltskha and avoided sharing the same quarter with the people of Erzurum. Certain circumstances, however, hampered this and they had to mix with the Armenians from Erzurum. Later, they did not miss the opportunity to “revolt” against their countrymen.¹²

The resettlers tried to name their quarter *Erzurum* after their former birthplace, but the Russian authorities and, particularly, Paskevich opposed this so that any memories of their homeland would sink into oblivion. Instead, the quarter was called *Plan* and was further built in accordance with a previously worked out plan. The solemn ceremony of the foundation of Nor (New) Akhaltskha took place on August 15, 1830, on the second anniversary of the Russian conquest of the city.¹³ Soon the craftsmen and merchants of Erzurum earned high reputation in Akhaltskha, converting it into one of the greatest economic centers of Transcaucasia. They also established trade unions.¹⁴

As already mentioned above, the Armenians of Erzurum reconstructed or founded over 50 villages in Akhalkalak District together with the local people. Those coming from the districts of Western Armenia, especially, Basen and the Plain of Erzurum took up living in separate villages together with their compatriots. However, many resettlers, and sometimes even the members of the same family had to take up residence in different villages due to the lack of land and other conditions. The Armenian Apostolic and Armenian Catholic communities living within a single village got split.

The following table shows where the Western Armenians settled down upon their immigration in the early 1830s:

Table 1

The Resettlers' New Places of Living	Presence of Native Armenians Prior to the Resettlement. The places whence the resettlers came¹⁵
Abul	Umudum Village of Erzurum District
Agana	Brdonk Village of Erzurum District
Akhalkalak	City of Erzurum and the nearby villages
Alastan	Artsati and Tvanj Villages of Erzurum District
Alatuman	Metz Gaghtarich Village of Erzurum District
Aragova	Jinis Village and Derjan City of Erzurum District
Azavret	Karakyopek Village of Erzurum District
Balkho	Natives; villages of Erzurum Province ¹⁶
Baralet	Natives; villages of Erzurum Province, the neighborhood of Ardahan, and partly Alashkert ¹⁷
Bavra	Vel Village of Ardahan District
Bezhan (Chanchgha)	Different villages of Erzurum District ¹⁸
Bughashen	Brnakapan Village of Erzurum District
Burnashet	Ortiz Village of Erzurum District
Chamdura	Killi (Gilli, Kyulli) ¹⁹ and partly Blur Villages of Erzurum District

Chiftlik (Agarak)	Different villages of Western Armenia
Damala	Shipek and Garnkot (Garver) Villages of Erzurum District, and the township of Rabat, which was the center of Derjan District
Dilif	Different villages of Mush and Khnus Districts
Diliska	Natives; Kerchenkotz, Geghakhor and other villages of Erzurum District
Ekhtila (Ikhtila)	Dzitahank and Karakyopek Villages of Erzurum District as well as Alvar and other villages of Basen District
Gandza	Natives; Kerchenkotz Village of Erzurum District
Gumburdo	Natives; Shakav Village of Erzurum District
Heshtia	Natives; Kyulli Village of Khnus
Jigrashen	Odzni, Arshuni, Dzitahogh and other villages of Erzurum District
Kartikam	Vel Village of Ardahan District
Kartzakh	Natives; Alvar, Metz and Pokr Du, Okum and Nist Villages of Basen
Khando	Khachkavank Village of Erzurum District and the city of Kars
Khertyis	Different villages of Western Armenia
Khorenia	Natives; different villages of Erzurum
Khospia (Metz)	Natives of Akhalkalak; Shekhnots Village of Erzurum
Khulgumo	Vel Village of Ardahan District
Kokia	Natives; different villages of Erzurum Province
Korkh	Yerkan-Masur Village of Erzurum District
Kulikam	Senkarich Village of Erzurum District
Majadia	Umudum Village of Erzurum District
Mamzara	Natives; different villages of Erzurum
Mercenia	Saladzor, Gomk, Ghushchi, Pochik and other villages of Erzurum District ²⁰
Metz Aragyal	Resettlers from Brdonk Village of Erzurum who settled in Agana in the 1830s

Metz Gondura	Targuni, Norshen and other villages of Erzurum
Metz Khanchali	Hindzk Village of Erzurum District
Metz Samsar (Tok) ²¹	Dinarigom and Umudum Villages of Erzurum District
Murjakhet	Different districts of Western Armenia
Orja	Kyoshk Village of Erzurum District ²²
Orojalar	Natives who were later joined by resettlers from different villages of Tzalka
Poka	Natives; Mush and Ardahan
Pokr Gondura	Villages of Kars and Mush (in 1829) and Saladzor Village of Erzurum (in 1830) ²³
Pokr Khanchali	Dinarigom and Kyoshk Villages of Erzurum District
Satkha	Sogyutli, Tzaghki, Jinis and other villages of Erzurum District
Sulda	Tordan Village of Tzerin Basen
Türtskh	Vel Village of Ardahan District
Vachian	Tvanj Village of Erzurum District
Varevan	Tvanj Village of Erzurum District

This table clearly indicates that it was the Western Armenian immigrants who reconstructed most of the deserted and abandoned villages of Javakhk. It should be mentioned that the natives of more than ten villages, who had stayed in their birthplaces, helped their compatriots financially in their reconstruction efforts. This is true, for example, of the inhabitants of Kokia, one of the oldest villages, whose ethnic Armenians constituted 29 families, or 233 people in 1828.²⁴ A considerable number of local Armenians who were forced out of their places of living during the military operations came back to their native land. The small community of Akhalkalak City settled in the adjacent village of Khospia. The natives of Mamzara returned to their village, too.²⁵

So, contrary to the Georgian scholars' and politicians' allegations that the district was merely Armenianized as a result of the immigration of the Western Armenians, it is evident that actually, they only came to add to the number of the native Armenians of Javakhk. Enjoying numerical

majority, the new settlers imposed the Western Armenian as well as their customs and traditions on the locals who spoke Eastern Armenian.²⁶ In 1831 the number of the Armenians inhabiting the entire district of Akhalkalak exceeded 30,000; of these, 1,816 families, or about 10,000 to 13,000 people, including 5,409 males, were natives.

In the 1830s, a small number of Western Armenian immigrants who did not get the prosperous living conditions promised by the Russian authorities, left for Western Armenia.²⁷ Most of the Western Armenians, however, overcame the difficulties and stayed to make their own share of contribution to the further construction of the region. In a short time, Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak regained their name as densely Armenian-populated districts throughout Transcaucasia. A considerable number of Meskhetians, unwilling to be under Russian domination, migrated to Turkey.

The Administrative and Demographic Situation Between the '30 and '60s of the 19th century

The period between the 1830s and 1860s marked the first stage of Russian dominance in the region. It was marked by the fortification of the Tsarist administrative and political system, restoration of the former demographic features of the once Armenian-populated villages, expansion of economic relations, and the establishment of spiritual life there.

To strengthen their position in the newly-occupied region, the Tsarist authorities pursued to establish a new form of administrative system. According to the Treaty of Adrianople, 8 out of the 24 sanjaks of Akhaltskha Elayet, namely Akhaltskha, Khertvis, Akhalkalak, Aspindza, Jajarak, Koblian, Abastuman, and Atzghor, were given to Russia, whereas the southern and central areas of Chelldr and Potskhov Districts remained under Turkish control. The Russian Empire also took possession of the northern part of Chelldr Sanjak, which is identical to the southern part of Historical Verin Javakhk, where the border lay between the watershed division of the mountains of Chelldr and Lake Khozapin.

This vast region, which covered an area of 78,000 versts (about 83,000 kilometres - A. M.), was approximately 120 versts (127 kilometres) long and 100 versts (106 kilometres) wide. It was to be conditionally labeled "Akhaltskha Province," "Akhaltskha Marz," and even "Akhaltskha Pashalic," as it was called formerly. It extended within 41 to 42 degrees of northern latitude and 60.20 to 61.42 degrees of eastern longitude.²⁸ It bordered on Imeret in the north; the former kingdom of Kartli in the northeast; the range of Borchalu in the southeast; Kars Elyayet in the south, and the districts of Akhaltskha Elyayet which remained under Turkish control in the southwest.

The government of the province was entrusted to a provisional administrative body consisting of high-ranking military figures and headed by a president.²⁹ In Akhaltskha Province as well as in other occupied regions, many provisions of the previous Turkish system were retained temporarily. Thus, the governance of the sanjaks was entrusted to the Sanjak Beys who represented both the civil and the military authorities. As a rule, a Russian commander stationed in the district would hold that position, but in certain cases the Russians left the posts to the former Turkish officials, in an attempt to please the local Muslim inhabitants and win over the Turkish landowners. For example, Governor of Akhalkalak Muti Bey, an affluent landowner who resided in Khospia Village, retained certain administrative power and was even awarded the military rank of Captain. His son Deda Bey soon became one of the richest landowners in the district.³⁰

However, such appointments were not made in all the sanjaks. Thus, the governance of Atzghor was entrusted to the Russian commander of that sanjak. His counterpart in Khertvis Fort was appointed Governor of Aspindza, Khertvis, and Akhalkalak Sanjaks. Thus, the Tsarist Government kept control and supervision over the Turkish beys through the Russian officials.

The sanjak beys were to secure law and order in the district; carry out the instructions of the administration; settle problems connected with the local military detachment, etc. They did not receive any state payment,

their income coming from the peasantry: in accordance with the former Turkish customs, they got 16 out of every 60 units of collected harvest, and 2 paras (2 kopecks) from the sale of every sheep.³¹

The villages, as before, were governed by village communities, whose heads were called *Mamasakhlis* by the local Georgians; *Aksakal* by the Turks, Karapapaks, and Kurds, and *Youzbashi* by the Western Armenian resettlers.³² The village heads were to resolve disputes between villages, collect taxes, secure the continuous functioning of the canals, etc. As a compensation for their services, they were exempted from all kinds of taxes and obligations. In large villages, the village heads were generally elected by the communities. Their assistants, called *Chavush* in Turkish, or *Desyatnik* in Russian, were elected by the village communities.

In the early 1830s, the administration center of Akhaltskha resembled a huge construction site. Opposite the fort, towering on the left bank of the river Potskhov, began the construction of Nor Kaghak (New City), whose site was inhabited by the Western Armenians.

According to the statistics of 1831, Akhaltskha's population comprised 2,468 families, including 5,447 male inhabitants. From a religious point of view, the city represented the following picture: 385 Armenian Catholic (623 males), 44 Georgian Orthodox, 26 Armenian Apostolic, 117 Jewish, and 24 Muslim families. The Armenians constituted more than half of the local population. They also enjoyed majority among the Western Armenian immigrants: thus, the city had 1,542 (4,000 males) Armenian Apostolic and 130 (296 males) Armenian Catholic families.³³ Adding to this about 6,000 women who were larger in number than the men as a result of the war, we can conclude that the population of the city must have totaled about 11,000.

Akhaltskha had a Georgian Orthodox church and 4 Armenian churches (three Apostolic and one Catholic), in addition to a synagogue, 2 caravanserais, 484 shops, and other institutions. On the whole, the state, religious, and civic buildings of Akhaltskha amounted to 700. In the middle of the 1830s, the number of the inhabitants of the city was 13,500.³⁴ Russian statistician O. Yevetski suggests that they totaled

13,000, including 5,445 male immigrants. Of these about 1,000 were prosperous, 2,500 could be classified as middle class, and 1,945 as the poor class.³⁵ The total number of males and females among the immigrants, who were predominantly Armenians, must have been about 9,000, i.e. the Armenians formed an overwhelming majority in the population of Akhaltskha.

The other towns of Akhaltskha Province were smaller than Akhaltskha. A few tens of Western Armenian families which had resettled in Akhalkalak in 1830 and some others that arrived there from Akhaltskha a year later founded a large quarter on a plateau south of the local semi-ruined fort. This stronghold remained populated only by the Russian garrison stationed there since 1828. In the new settlement the families built apartments, a bakery, and a cafe. Soon the number of these families reached about 100, each of them getting 50 silver rubles from the Russian authorities.³⁶ The newcomers applied for permission to build a new suburb in the southeast of Akhalkalak. By the mid-1830s, it had nearly 1,000 inhabitants, mainly including Armenians. In 1836 Akhalkalak was given the status of township.

The fortress town of Khertvis had a total of 600 Turkish, Armenian, and Georgian inhabitants. The seat of the Sanjak Bey of Jajarak was Uravel Village, which had a population of 200. Potskhov had its center in Dugur (Dughur) Village, Koblian in Mokhe, and Cheldr in Kartzakh. The administrative centers of Abastuman, Atzghor, and Aspindza were the village towns of the same name.³⁷ According to Yevetski, Akhaltskha Province had a population of 13,500 families, or 70,000 people,³⁸ comprising Armenians, Georgians, Kurds, Ottoman Turks, and Karapapaks. The Armenians predominantly populated Veriny Javakhk, comprising the sanjaks of Akhalkalak, Khertvis, and Cheldr. Akhaltskha Sanjak had 18 villages with a population of 2,859 families (7,143 males), most of which comprised Western Armenians. Atzghor had the same number of villages with 366 Armenian Apostolic families, and Aspindza Sanjak had 12 villages.

In 1831 a great many Western Armenian resettlers who were completely deprived of essential means of living found refuge in Khertvis

Sanjak, which created a serious problem there. Those who had taken up living in the fort of Khertvis as well as in the neighboring 38 villages and 7 winter residences (most of them lay on a plain on the right bank of the river Kur, near the border of Akhalkalak Sanjak) comprised 942 Armenian Apostolic and 137 Armenian Catholic families. The other ethnic and religious communities, namely the Georgians, Jews, and Muslims, comprised about 500 families.³⁹

Akhalkalak Sanjak, occupying most of the territory of Verin Javakhk, was one of the densely-populated areas in Akhaltskha Province, although in 1831 only 35 out of the local 50 villages were inhabited. Of the populated villages, 13 were state-owned, with 122 native and 216 resettled families living there: on the whole, they comprised 1,209 people. The religious make-up of the sanjak was as follows: 586 Armenian Apostolic, 51 Armenian Catholic, the same number of Georgian Orthodox, and 282 Muslim families.⁴⁰ This clearly shows that in the 1830s, Akhaltskha Province and, particularly, Verin Javakhk, was predominantly an Armenian-populated administrative unit.

By 1833 to 1834, the Russo-Turkish joint committee finalized the verification of the borders. Under the previous agreement, the borderline was to lie on the southern slopes of Cheldr Mountains; consequently, the villages of Chamdura, Karakala, Bash Köy, and others, situated north of Lake Cheldr and extending up to those slopes, were to remain in the Russian Empire. All these villages lay uninhabited, except for Chamdura, which had been populated by Armenians from Alvar. Nist, Metz Du, Pokr Du, and Okumi Villages of Basen Plateau since 1831. However, the Russians gave up all these villages to Turkey, arguing that they were uninhabited and cut off from Akhalkalak Sanjak by mountain ranges. The Armenians of Basen were again displaced, this time to the border town of Kartzakh. The Turkish inhabitants of this village were moved into Chamdura Village of Cheldr. Kartzakh, that represented a village of Turkish landowners, served as the administrative center of the Russian part of Cheldr Sanjak for a short time. Archbishop Karapet purchased this village at 83 purses of Turkish para (about 2,000 rubles).⁴¹ Those parts of

Cheldr and Potskhov Sanjaks that shifted to Russia soon ceased existing as separate entities: the part of Cheldr joined Akhalkalak Sanjak.

In the period between 1834 and 1840, no serious administrative changes took place in Akhaltskha Province. Here, as in the entire newly-conquered region of Transcaucasia, the former Ottoman and Persian ruling methods were still predominant. To change the situation and introduce the Russian regime into the province, the Tsarist Government established a special committee there under the chairmanship of Senator Gan.⁴²

On April 10, 1840, Transcaucasia underwent a new administrative division, all of the former administrative units, including Akhaltskha Province, being liquidated. Georgia and most of Eastern Armenia were included in the Georgian-Imeretian Province,⁴³ which comprised the following 11 districts: Tiflis, Kutayis, Guria, Akhaltskha, Gori, Telav, Belokan, Alexandropol, Yerevan, Nakhijevan, and Yelizavetpol. Akhaltskha Province was converted to Akhaltskha District and was divided into the following sub-districts: Akhaltskha, Abastuman, Koblian, Atzghur, Khertvis, and Akhalkalak. Akhaltskha was the seat of the Administrative Body, including the District Head, the Mayor, his assistant, the Provincial Secretary, the State Property Trustee, the Surveyor, the District Treasurer, the Doctor, and others.⁴⁴ At first the administrative positions in both the district and the sub-districts were basically entrusted to non-Caucasian military men and different officials: thus, in 1845 the district judge was A. Lyulin; the Governor of Akhaltskha District was Ye. Zaporozhchenko; the judge of Abastuman was I. Volkov; in Khertvis the same post was held by Danilov, and in Akhalkalak by N. Krizhanovsky.⁴⁵ Beginning with the 1850s, the local people were appointed to certain positions: in 1850 the assessor of Khertvis was Mutafian; his counterpart in Atzghor was Mepisov (Mepissian). In the middle of the 1850s, ensign Sargis Hazarapetian (Sergei Azarapetov) assumed long-term work in the administrative bodies of Akhaltskha.⁴⁶ However, the assessors and police officials of the other districts were either Russians or Ukrainians (in Akhalkalak the post of judge was occupied by a certain Sayevich).

The aforementioned administrative-territorial system remained in force until December 1846, when the Georgian-Imeretian Province was divided into the provinces of Tiflis and Kutayis, each of them comprising 5 districts. The sub-district of Akhalkalak, which was part of Akhaltskha District, joined Kutayis Province. This new arrangement created rather unfavorable conditions for the administrative-economic government of Akhalkalak, which now could maintain communications with the Provincial Center only indirectly, i.e. via Akhaltskha. This posed artificial obstacles for the economic development of Javakhk. Besides, since Kutayis was quite a distance away from Akhalkalak, it was hard for the southern inhabitants to get there. As a consequence, Akhalkalak was reduced to one of the poorest economically developed areas.

This situation compelled the Russian authorities to plan shifting the sub-district of Akhalkalak from Akhaltskha District of Kutayis Province into Alexandropol District of Tiflis Province neighboring Javakhk. One such plan was drawn up in 1854.⁴⁷ We are of the opinion that during the Crimean war of 1853, when the Turks invaded Akhaltskha District and created rather a dangerous situation there,⁴⁸ the isolation of Akhalkalak Sub-District from Kutayis became even more tangible.

It is interesting to note that after 1854 Akhalkalak is mentioned as part of Akhaltskha District of Kutayis Province and Alexandropol District of Tiflis Province interchangeably. Most probably, no official decision was made for this interchangeability. For internal policies, though, Akhalkalak maintained administrative relations with the neighboring district of Alexandropol.

The period between 1867 and 1868 marked new administrative-territorial divisions in Transcaucasia. Under a code of laws adopted on April 16, 1867, Tiflis Province was reorganized to include the districts of Akhaltskha, Gori, Dushet, Tiflis, Telav, and Signakh, the okrug of Tianet, and the police municipality of Shirak (it is not Shirak District of Armenia - A. M.). The statute approved on December 9, 1867, reorganized Kutayis Province as well. On February 12, 1868, the Caucasian viceroy issued a decree in accordance with which these changes were put into effect on

February 19. Under the same decree, the territory of the former sub-district of Akhalkalak became part of Akhaltskha District, then under the control of Tiflis, as a police municipality. This was the first step on the part of the authorities to grant Akhalkalak relative independence.

Finally, on November 3, 1874, the State Council issued a decree on establishing the districts of Akhalkalak and Tianet within Tiflis Province. Akhalkalak was to include the territory of the former police municipality as well as 2 villages in Gori District, and 10 in the southeast of Akhaltskha District. On April 1, 1875, the formation of these districts received official approval.⁴⁹

At last the authorities gave up the "principle" of arbitrarily dividing the borders of the newly-established districts, and started using natural geographical factors. As a result, the new district of Akhalkalak came to include the territory of Historical Verin Javakhk, which had the following borders: in the west, Akhaltskha District, with a considerable part of the frontier being marked by the river Kur; in the north, Gori District, with the frontier lying in Treghk Mountains and Lake Tabatzghuri; in the east, Borchalu District, with the frontier line being marked by the mountains of Javakhk; in the southeast, it neighbored Yerevan Province, the frontier being indicated by the watershed of Ashotsk and Javakhk Plateaus; in the south, it bordered on Turkey, the frontier lying in the mountains of Cheldr and Lake Khozapin.⁵⁰ The region of Kars, which had formed part of Russia since the Russo-Turkish war of 1877 to 1878, became the southwestern neighbor of Akhalkalak District.

Following the example of the other districts, the governance of Akhalkalak District was vested in the District Head. The districts, as before, comprised subdistricts, whose administrators were dependent on the District Heads. The reforms implemented between the 1860s and '70s stripped the local police officials of their judiciary power.

Akhalkalak, which enjoyed the status of district until the 1930s, had highly favorable conditions for administrative-economic development.

One of the most serious problems facing the Russian authorities was trying to alleviate the grave living conditions of the resettlers, something

they were absolutely unprepared for. Nonetheless, both during the immigration and immediately after it, the Russian officials took some measures to improve the disastrous state of the resettlers. To do that, they heavily relied on Archbishop Karapet, who enjoyed unquestionable authority and popularity among the immigrants. On June 30, the pasha of Akhaltskha issued an order empowering Archbishop Karapet to oversee the distribution of winter residences located in Aspindza to these people.⁵¹ In May 1831, General Paskevich instructed Prince David Behboutov to allocate jewellery to the archbishop to meet the needs of the immigrants. In August of the same year, Pankratev issued a decree exempting these people from customs duties.⁵²

The native Armenians rendered considerable assistance to their compatriots: the inhabitants of Kokia Village supplied them with 270 kuruses (Turkish money); 19 somars (an ancient unit of measurement equal to about 16 kilograms, so approximately 300 kilograms) of wheat, 29 somars (approximately 465 kilograms) of barley and 15 hakhas of oil.⁵³ All these, however, could not even partially improve the miserable situation of the Western Armenian immigrants.

Archbishop Karapet, deeply realizing his responsibility and duty towards the resettlers, made every possible effort to improve their conditions. Unfortunately, when he left for Tiflis in 1831, the situation deteriorated again.⁵⁴

Taking advantage of the situation, some Turkish spies who had slipped into Akhaltskha and Javakhk in the early 1830s started instigating the resettlers to anti-Russian actions, even encouraging them to go back.⁵⁵ Escape to Western Armenia assumed larger scale in the spring of 1832. Disappointed at not having got the promised "paradise," they decided, difficult as it was, to return.⁵⁶ A document written in those days reads, "Until May 27, our people lived in tranquility, but on that very same day, some of them began to flee home..." The authorities sent a 50-soldier Cossack cavalry detachment to stop the escapees, but it was confronted with armed resistance. Eventually, the resettlers crossed the Russo-Turkish border.⁵⁷

In Akhaltskha, Kartzakh, Alexandropol, and other border areas, the authorities stationed special frontier posts with the authority to punish the border trespassers. A special law was passed to launch criminal proceedings against such people. In a letter addressed to Archbishop Karapet on July 28, the authorities "asked" him to inform all the immigrants about that law.⁵⁸

The Western Armenians' resentment was also due to the ill treatment by the Russian officials who abused their power. Thus, for example, Lieutenant Colonel Drashern, the head of Akhaltskha District, played an extremely negative role in the matter. The Russians settled the Armenian immigrants on the private lands once owned by Muslims. The latter soon came back, presented their "legal" documents (some of these papers later turned out fake) and demanded either large sums in compensation for their lands or an immediate evacuation. As a result, the Government now forced the immigrants to move to other places. However, due to the scarcity of unoccupied lands, most of them became landless. They either wandered in Akhaltskha, Akhalkalak, Atzghor, Shirak, and other places or stayed in their original places and suffered grave economic dependency on the new Muslim landowners who had purchased the lands very cheap. Instead of buying these lands themselves and allocating them to the immigrants, the authorities permitted a great many private individuals, such as Russian military men and some Armenian landowners, to take possession of most of the villages by paying small sums to the Turkish landowners. The Government confined itself to buying Multi Bey's property, i.e. only 29 small, deserted villages located in different sanjaks, for 3,600 rubles.⁵⁹ As mentioned earlier, only 13 of these villages were in Akhalkalak District. The new landowners, taking advantage of their impunity, started abusing and exploiting the immigrants badly. In fact, the decision of the Tsarist Government to settle the newcomers only on state-owned lands was violently broken: thus, the Russian dominion marked the establishment of land ownership in Akhalkalak and Akhaltskha villages, which posed a grave obstacle for the development of agriculture in the region.⁶⁰

In March 1831, a group of Western Armenian immigrants living on private lands addressed a petition to Archbishop Karapet, stating that they were being exploited not only by the foreign landowners, but also by the local ones (Yerlies) and those from Tiflis. They suffered exploitation even by their compatriot Mahtesy (*a title used with reference to Christian believers who are known to have gone to Jerusalem on pilgrimage*) Harutiun from Baberd, who had immigrated together with them. He did not feel the slightest remorse towards his fellow immigrants. The landlords, through their friends in the police, forced the resettlers to either obey or pay a variety of heavy taxes. The petition goes on to say, "800 families of villagers assembled from different places were compelled to leave the private villages they lived in and move to royal-owned land. Baberd's intention is nothing but to convert all of us, citizens and villagers alike, to servants called serfs."⁶¹ We should add that the state had ceased paying the immigrants their allowances and stopped supplying grain. The petition further states, "These miserable people are at a loss and in utter despair: they have spent their money on building houses and a church. They tilled their fields and sowed seeds for the autumn and spring... and now are crying in great tumult and ultimate despondency." The immigrants' hopelessness has reached a point where they prefer "to serve the Ottomans rather than become the serfs of such people."⁶²

The city dwellers of Akhaltskha, Atzghor, and Akhalkalak were in the same desperate state as their compatriots in villages. Drashern demanded that the immigrants who were sheltered in tents and had meager funds should follow the Government's special plans and build houses for themselves. The resettlers were unable to carry out that difficult task without serious assistance from the state. Besides, they wanted to build their houses in accordance with Western Armenian architectural style, thus trying to differ from the local Armenians. When the resettlers again protested against the District Head's requirements, the latter, who acted on behalf of Paskevich, turned to threats to veil his abuses and inability to perform his duties properly.⁶³

Particularly lamentable was the situation in Atzghor: 27 homeless families from Gyumri and Aspidza, escaping either the shortage of land or the demands of the private landowners, came to add to the number of the 283 families of immigrants already living there.⁶⁴

The craftsmen and merchants of Akhaltskha were in discontent, too. One of the factors was that they were deprived of the possibility of conducting free trade with the Ottoman Empire and European countries; therefore, they did not miss a single opportunity to voice their resentment against the Russian authorities.⁶⁵

By August 1831, some of the immigrants living in Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak had not sold their properties in Western Armenia yet. According to an existing agreement, if their sale was delayed for 3 more months, the Turkish Government would confiscate them. Thus, Harutiun Mutaſian, Aghajan Hayrapetian, and Karapet Harutiunian, members of the Special Committee who had stayed in Karin (Erzurum), worked diligently to finish the sales.⁶⁶ A large number of properties still remained unsold. The activities of the aforementioned committee can be traced to August 1835. It succeeded in persuading the Armenians of Erzurum who had not emigrated to move to the Russian frontiers. It was also successful in making the people who had escaped from Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak return from Erzurum.⁶⁷

The Russian authorities continued encouraging the emigration of Armenians from Western Armenia, even though they faced the discontent of many Armenians and were well-aware of the facts of escape from Javakhk and Akhaltskha.

To prevent the return of the immigrants, the Russians, under the plea of preventing the spread of epidemics from the Ottoman Empire, established a few quarantine posts, where Cossack detachments forced numerous refugees to return to their new places of residence. These posts, which were actually intended to stop the emigration by force, often posed serious impediments for the continuous massive emigration from Western Armenia to Transcaucasia, the realization of which required great efforts by the Russian officials in Erzurum, as well as Gregory

Shekerjian's committee and Harutiun Mutafian's group. Thanks to the propaganda implemented by the latter, in 1831 new groups of Western Armenians moved to Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak from Karin and the nearby villages.⁶⁸ Gregory Shekerjian used to complain that the Russian quarantine post-stationed in Ardahan created difficulties for the immigrants.⁶⁹

In the middle of the 1830s, the people inhabiting the comparatively densely-populated districts of Akhaltskha and Atzghor moved to the plains of Akhalkalak and Shirak.⁷⁰

In June of 1837, prior to Tsar Nicholas I's visit to Akhaltskha, a number of newsettlers in Akhaltskha addressed a special letter to Archbishop Karapet, asking him to intercede with the Emperor on their behalf for retaining their tax privileges and exempting the merchants from customs obligations.⁷¹ Archbishop Karapet properly presented the problem to the Tsar and was able to prolong the privileges of the previous six years by another two years. This fact considerably softened the immigrants' dissatisfaction with the authorities.

In the 1830s, the agriculture of the entire marz of Akhaltskha and the sanjak of Akhalkalak was in a devastated state. The fields of wheat were reduced considerably. Particularly deplorable was the situation in the sphere of stock-breeding. The continuous theft of animals under the Turkish dominion and the substantial need for skin during the Russo-Turkish war had considerably decreased the number of livestock: the large marz had only 45,000 head of big cattle, 42,000 head of small cattle as well as 7,000 horses and donkeys.⁷²

A certain degree of development could be observed in beekeeping in the villages of Akhalkalak, as well as farming and viticulture in the sanjaks of Atzghor, Aspindza, and partly Khertvis.

Economic bloom was observed only in Akhaltskha and that thanks to the emigrants of Erzurum, who quickly restored its former fame as an industrial, commercial, and craftsmanship center, establishing business ties with Tiflis, Erzurum, Constantinople, Trebizond, and other cities.

The adoption of the Trade Unions' Charter on March 15, 1843 was a great contribution to the preservation and development of the distinctive handicraft traditions of Karin.⁷³

It was only in the second stage of the Russian domination, i.e. in the late 1840s, that Akhalkalak District began to experience socio-economic and cultural development. Akhalkalak became a center of craftsmanship, its villages assuming an important role in wheat production in Transcaucasia. Soon the Customs House of Khozapin was established on the main road of commerce with Kars and Ardahan, near Kartzakh Village.

The preserved archive documents retain materials relating to the demography of the Apostolic villages (they formed a majority among the other settlements) of Akhalkalak District between the '30s and '40s of the 19th century and in the subsequent years. Let us compare the records of the church registers of 1838 to 1850, where the number of the district's population is given as per individuals.⁷⁴

Table 2

Villages		1838	1840	1842	1844	1847	1850
1	Abul	251	238	251	274	280	289
2	Agana	174	169	180	202	210	219
3	Akhalkalak	928	976	1,119	1,204	1,264	1,461
4	Alatuman	120	130	153	177	162	178
5	Aragova	333	657	650	698	272	328
6	Azavret	356	371	393	426	500	364
7	Balkho	108	127	139	160	160	176
8	Baralet	245	274	363	384	330	304
9	Bezhanov (Chanchgha)	221	196	224	260	350	364
10	Bughashen	114	111	98	360	184	198
11	Burnashet	296	330	350	378	105	109
12	Buzavet	307	-	-	-	88	115

Villages		1838	1840	1842	1844	1847	1850
13	Chamdura	291	307	283	302	390	390
14	Chiftlik	300	220	286	312	240	252
15	Dadesh	-	-	-	-	-	310
16	Damala	160	249	303	334	260	305
17	Dilif	342	151	183	204	218	251
18	Diliska	621	499	476	513	490	522
19	Drkna	-	-	-	-	52	53
20	Ekhtila (Ikhtila)	580	576	525	566	630	482
21	Gandza	105	-	206	232	350	368
22	Gom (Goman)	-	-	-	-	214	222
23	Gumburdo	392	379	387	421	447	460
24	Jigrashen	259	367	345	376	420	452
25	Kacho	80	65	63	73	57	83
26	Kartzakh	613	617	639	689	930	942
27	Khando	301	291	361	392	400	327
28	Khertvis (Khertez)	293	244	263	294	204	173
29	Khojabek	-	-	-	-	182	220
30	Khorenia	147	145	159	184	-	151
31	Khospia	96	99	107	121	111	126
32	Kokia	92	84	-	-	-	14
33	Korkh	434	493	500	531	375	416
34	Kulikam	215	213	246	271	263	295
35	Lomaturtskh	-	-	-	-	-	150
36	Majadia	-	258	298	320	304	325
37	Mamzara	101	113	137	162	168	183
38	Merenia	312	321	299	322	390	444
39	Metz Aragyal	192	149	190	210	201	767
40	Metz Gondura	241	256	254	277	325	336

Villages		1838	1840	1842	1844	1847	1850
41	Metz Khanchali	204	189	225	254	311	341
42	Metz Samsar (Tok)	230	201	185	207	223	119
43	Murjakhet	92	73	89	101	29	30
44	Poka	152	155	94	114	272	238
45	Pokr Gondura	110	157	170	188	202	178
46	Pokr Khanchali	-	-	-	-	-	42
47	Satkha	414	456	494	529	650	210
48	Sirk	-	-	-	-	-	37
49	Sulda	354	369	315	349	440	536
50	Vachian	344	407	431	476	535	595
51	Yerja	272	380	416	439	276	335
52	Zak	161	171	155	176	206	220
Total Number of Settlements		44	43	43	43	46	52
Total Number of Inhabitants		1,953	12,233	13,004	14,462	14,670	16,008

This table clearly indicates that in 1838, when the migrations to and from Western Armenia had not ceased yet, Akhalkalak District had 43 villages and a township, all of them inhabited by followers of the Armenian Apostolic Church, with a total population of 12,000.

The influx of people had resulted in a considerable increase in the number of the local population and settlements occurred because of. In 1850 the sub-district of Akhalkalak comprised 52 settlements of Armenian Apostolic faith with more than 16,000 inhabitants: because of the shortage of land, between 7 and 8 villages had been founded there.

The picture of the resettlement is as follows: in 1845 about 70 people from Chiftlik (the families of the Bichakhs, Sukias, Apik, and others) resettled in Buzavet Village.⁷⁵ In 1845 to 1846, a large number of inhab-

itants of Aragova Village emigrated; as a result, the number of the locals decreased sharply from 698 to 272. Twenty-two emigrant families, or 204 people resettled in Gom (Goman) Village.⁷⁶ A group of resettlers from Erzurum who had taken up residence in Chiftlik and Chamdura added to the number of the native Armenians (Yerlies) of Dadesh Village, lying in the south of the district, and imparted a spirit of rebirth to it. In 1848 seven families of Basen Armenians living in Ekhtila resettled in the deserted village of Drkna. In 1849 about 10 families moved to Lomaturtskh.⁷⁷ In those years, the devastated villages of Sirk and Pokr (Smaller) Khanchali experienced revival, too.⁷⁸ It is interesting to note that in the late 1840s, several ruined villages in Akhalkalak District were revived not only on account of the inhabitants of the adjacent settlements but also thanks to the people coming from the neighboring districts. Thus, Khojabek Village situated on the stream Agrichay was reconstructed through the efforts of the emigrants from Alexandropol and a few nearby districts.⁷⁹

In 1845, by the decision of the Senate, Akhalkalak was given the status of supernumerary city which was to have its own police system supported by local means. "From that day on," writes the first police commissar of Akhalkalak, V. Perevalenko, "the city began to expand noticeably on account of the (new - A. M.) buildings." According to the data found in the Caucasian Calendar and "Kavkaz" newspaper, in 1851 Akhalkalak had 2,675 inhabitants (including 2,619 Armenians), 10 streets, 300 shopping stands, 187 stone and 8 wooden buildings, 4 bridges, 20 shops, a caravanserai, 23 taverns and cafés, 4 bakeries, 4 barber shops, and 9 smithies. According to assistant surveyor of the district Korganov, the city was not large and occupied about 433 dessiatinas (approximately 472 hectares - A. M.), of which 344 dessiatinas (375 hectares) were pastures, 44 dessiatinas (48 hectares) were occupied by streets and various buildings, and more than 44 dessiatinas (over 48 hectares) were used for vegetable gardens and farmland adjoining the houses.⁸⁰ Akhalkalak had state baths rented for ten years to Yakubov (Hakobian) and Petrosov (Petrossian). It also had several mills on the

stream Murjakhhet (Karasnaghbyur).⁸¹ One of the remarkable events in the commercial life of the district was the opening of a 15-day fair on September 1, 1851. The trade with Kars and Ardahan via the Customs House of Khozapin flourished. There was no hospital as such: only a small, 15-bed health center served the garrison of the fort.

In the second half of the 1840s, the external ethnic displacements of the Armenians almost ceased in the Transcaucasian territories that had joined the Russian Empire; there was no mass immigration or emigration from or into Western Armenia. During this period, internal ethnic displacements and natural growth of population were particularly observed in the Southern Caucasian districts belonging to Russia.

The 1840s marked an influx of the members of the religious sect of Dukhobors from different provinces of the Russian Empire into Javakhk. Exiled from Melitopol District of Tavria Province between 1840 and 1845, some of them resettled in the south of Akhalkalak District (present-day Ninotzmindia District) and founded 8 to 9 villages there. Of these villages, Bogdanovka, Slavyanka, Goreloye, Spasskoye, Orlovka, Yefremovka, and Troyitskoye were located in the southeastern corner of the district, on the road to Alexandropol District, while Tambovka and Radionovka were situated in the east, in the vicinity of Lake Parvana. The area inhabited by the members of this sect was often called *Dukhoborie*. In 1850 299 families of Russian Dukhobors lived in the villages of Slavyanka, Spasskoye, Goreloye, and Troyitskoye.⁸² One of these families, the Kalmikovs (Larion Kalmikov first, then his son Pyotr and the latter's wife Lukeria) enjoyed great spiritual influence in the Dukhobor community. Thus, under these circumstances Javakhk became a multinational district.

The growth of the population of Akhalkalak increased rapidly in the middle of the 19th century, when the immigrants set a firm foothold in the newly-established areas. Soon a younger generation came to replace the older one, and the living conditions were relatively improved: each family had its own dwelling, the birth rate increased, and infant mortality decreased.

The following table represents the available statistical data on the population of the Armenian Apostolic villages of Akhalkalak from 1856 to 1878.⁸³

Table 3

Settlements		1856	1858	1860	1865	1869	1878
1	Abul	358	355	367	428	455	648
2	Agana	221	246	268	318	355	370
3	Akhalkalak City	1,670	— ⁸⁴	2,045	2,263	2,476	3,178
4	Alatuman	229	197	205	204	281	374
5	Aragova	457	483	424	531	614	778
6	Azavret	586	601	628	884	995	1,184
7	Balkho	190	205	214	245	278	340
8	Baralet	347	373	399	448	684	445
9	Bezhanov (Chanchgha)	375	438	454	537	619	776
10	Bughashen	211	210	212	245	248	337
11	Burnashet	435	351	417	537	290	345
12	Buzavet	178	241	282	206	239	314
13	Chamdura	408	355	301	419	461	507
14	Chekharola	—	—	—	73	73	104
15	Chiftlik	284	261	266	328	361	423
16	Dadesh	317	420	450	543	611	674
17	Damala	273	315	315	384	429	527
18	Dilif	319	307	332	407	451	511
19	Diliska	693	614	637	712	826	987
20	Drkna	96	87	90	100	112	130
21	Ekhtila (Ikhtila)	382	415	429	551	479	511
22	Gandza	458	469	469	599	699	949

Settlements		1856	1858	1860	1865	1869	1878
23	Ghadolar	—	—	—	—	304	324
24	Ghaurma	86	95	102	136	160	202
25	Ghulalis	—	—	—	—	—	83
26	Gom (Goman)	397	425	424	519	578	710
27	Gumburdo	532	564	563	649	739	941
28	Jigrashen	521	551	574	647	713	868
29	Kacho	90	58	60	92	188	245
30	Kartzakh	775	999	1,029	1,147	1,208	1,558
31	Khando	612	525	544	563	637	754
32	Khertvis (Khertez)	75	87	88	90	—	94
33	Khojabek	262	282	294	358	348	439
34	Khorenia	215	230	231	257	280	336
35	Khospia	150	199	—	179	205	267
36	Kokia	—	92	—	—	—	—
37	Korkh	483	496	482	571	656	525
38	Kulikam	321	290	—	347	397	514
39	Lomaturtskh	136	128	138	165	196	220
40	Majadia	337	346	364	412	463	479
41	Mamzara	241	262	245	338	388	458
42	Merenia	444	519	551	270	636	733
43	Metz Aragyal	272	273	295	320	335	440
44	Metz Gondura	428	471	497	461	728	661
45	Metz Khanchali	371	396	421	475	559	688
46	Metz Samsar (Tok)	138	158	160	218	233	322
47	Molit (with Ghezhelkilisa)	—	—	—	—	—	264
48	Mragoval	—	—	—	—	—	100
49	Murjakhet	35	36	—	39	—	37

Settlements		1856	1858	1860	1865	1869	1878
50	Olaverd	252	278	289	346	381	535
51	Orja	431	433	450	420	483	569
52	Orojalar	—	—	—	—	330	319
53	Poka	324	372	393	435	516	631
54	Pokr Aragyal	—	—	—	156	178	246
55	Pokr Gondura	203	216	231	297	369	479
56	Pokr Khanchali	88	94	104	147	163	267
57	Pokr Samsar	177	186	194	461	296	352
58	Satkha	843	853	872	1042	1201	1292
59	Sirk	—	40	41	44	47	76
60	Sulda	461	508	539	703	807	809
61	Vachian	650	730	776	884	973	1057
62	Zak	381	177	—	254	283	320
Total		19,218	18,312 + 1,800 =20,112 ⁸⁵	20,155	24,404	28,014	33,626

Table No. 3 shows that in the course of 20 years, the number of the settlements of the district considerably grew from 52 to 61, and the populations of the largest villages such as Kartzakh, Satkha, Azavret, and Vachian increased to more than 1,000. In the meantime, the villages of Orojalar, Pokr Aragyal, Chkharola, Mragval, Molit, Ghulalis, and Ghadolar were either repopulated, or founded. Some emigrants from Umudum, Dinarigom, Kars, Basen, and elsewhere primarily resettled in different villages of Javakhk, but by the 1860s, they had taken up residence in Pokr Aragyal.⁸⁶ Twelve families of the descendants of the emigrants from Ortiz Village of Erzurum Province, living in Burnashet since 1832, established Ghadolar in 1867. In 1868 the immigrants who had settled in Ashkala, Daraköv, and Hünisa Villages of Tzalka moved to Orojalar, thus increasing the number of the local ethnic Armenians. In the

early 1860s, the people from Kajo and other villages took up living in Chkharola, southwest of Lake Tabatzghuri. In the early 1870s, the inhabitants of Tzalka added to the number of the residents of the neighboring village of Molit, which had had only a small number of houses since the early 1860s. In the 1870s, the people of Tzalka also reconstructed Ghulalis.⁸⁷ In the second half of the 1870s, Mragoyal was reinhabited.

In 1867 a considerable increase was observed in the number of the population of Akhalkalak City, which had acquired the status of police municipality. This growth was due to the efforts of First Police Officer I. Nevtonov. Visiting the city in those years, L. Zagurski wrote, "Akhalkalak has a square, sidewalks, paved streets and quite fine buildings. Thanks to the efforts of M. I. Nevtonov, Governor of Akhalkalak Police Municipality, the city is becoming more and more beautiful day by day. The local inhabitants, who amount to 2,500, are predominantly of the Armenian Apostolic faith and descend from the emigrants of Erzurum."⁸⁸ The same author testifies that the people of Akhalkalak often spent time in the vicinity of Shavshan Tapa, a hill towering in the southeast of the city.

The Religious and Spiritual Life in Akhalkalak (1830 to 1880)

In the last stage of Turkish rule, the sub-diocese of Akhalkalak, which was under the jurisdiction of Erzurum, had ceased functioning so that Archbishop Karapet embarked upon the restoration of spiritual life there.

With the Catholics' appropriation of Akhaltskha Diocese, Javakhk was left without any spiritual guidance and was, therefore, included in Karin Diocese. In 1830 Archbishop Karapet Bagratuny, the leader of this diocese, chose this region as a site for the emigrants of Erzurum. As a result, the former ethnic make-up of the region was restored, and the number of religious buildings increased there. During the migration of 1830, on the order of Archbishop Karapet, most of the religious utensils of Erzurum churches and monasteries, including hundreds of manuscripts, and valuable objects, were loaded onto 13 carts⁸⁹ and moved to

Akhaltskha. Part of these items were distributed among the newly-built churches. Between 1830 and 1840, more than 75 Armenian Apostolic churches were restored, or founded in the districts of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak as well as in the sub-district of Tzalka. Religious ceremonies were conducted by more than 190 clergymen most of whom were ordained by Archbishop Karapet himself.⁹⁰

Until 1837, with the permission of the Russian authorities, Archbishop Karapet served as the spiritual leader of the Armenians of the entire region, this diocese representing a peculiar spiritual body for the Western Armenian immigrants. When Archbishop Karapet was appointed leader of the Georgian-Imeretian Diocese established on August 5, 1837, more than 100 villages of Akhaltskha, Akhalkalak and Tzalka were included in it as a sub-diocese of Akhaltskha. In the '30s to '40s of the 19th century, most of the Armenian villages in Javakhk and the adjacent districts had wooden churches mainly with wooden domes.⁹¹

Initially, all the 3 districts constituted a single diocese, but from the middle of the 1850s, they were separated: Akhaltskha became a distinct diocese, while Akhalkalak and Tzalka together came to form a smaller diocese that was to be "under the jurisdiction of the diocese authorities, with a senior rural dean serving there as a leader." The latter was not directly under the authority of the diocese leader: he was dependent on the spiritual leadership of Akhaltskha, whose residence was Sourb Prkich (Holy Saviour) Church founded in Akhaltskha in 1836 (Archbishop Karapet donated the income received from the villages of Kartzakli, Dadesh, Khozapin, Karav, and others to it). Sourb Khach (Holy Cross) Church, built in the early 1830s, became the seat of the senior rural dean of Akhalkalak.

In January 1837, the District Administration of Akhaltskha decided to take away from Archbishop Karapet the villages of Sulda (partly), Oplakh, Buzal, and others under the plea that he did not possess the necessary documents confirming his purchase of these lands from their former owner, Sharif Mahmed Bey.⁹² Archbishop Karapet, however, successfully defended his legal rights. Baron Rozen attempted to persuade

him to sell them to the state, but in vain. In 1838 the Provisional Administration of Akhaltskha had to acknowledge Sourb Prkich Church as the rightful owner of these lands.⁹³ The income received from them was used for educational and charity purposes.

In the 1850s, stone churches came to replace the wooden ones. It was first of all necessary to thoroughly reconstruct Akhalkalak's semi-ruined church of Sourb Khach, which "... seems to be collapsing because of its old age, thus endangering the lives of a great number of believers."⁹⁴ The preliminary work, that started in January 1854, was followed by construction after permission had been received from Catholicos Nerses Ashtaraketsi. The new church was "13 sazhen long, 8 sazhen wide and 3 sazhen high, with 15 windows as well as other facilities..."⁹⁵ With Mahtesy Karapet Yaghubian donating the money necessary for the work, it was completed in 1856.

Beginning with particularly the 1860s, tens of wooden, or semi-destroyed churches were either rebuilt or converted into stone ones. By the end of the century, the overwhelming majority of the villages had their own churches with parish priests.

In the 19th-century, the following churches of Javakhk (without the villages of Akhaltskha and Tzalka) were under the spiritual leadership of Akhaltskha⁹⁶:

Table 4

* The asterisks mark the Armenian Catholic villages.

Sub-Diocese of Akhalkalak		
Settlements	Church Names	Year/s of Construction
1 Abul	Sourb Harutiun Sourb Astvatatzin	1830 to 1865 1881 to 1884
2 Agana	Sourb Hreshtakapetats	1830 to 1864
3 Akhalkalak	Sourb Khach	1830
4 Alastan*	Sourb Astvatzamor Verapokhman	1856 to 1863

Settlements	Church Names	Year/s of Construction
5 Alatuman	Sourb Yerrordutuin	1830 to 1862
6 Aragova	St. Gevorg	1830 to 1863
7 Azavret	Sts. Matthew and Mark the Evangelists St. Mesrop	1830 to 1864 1868 to 1870
8 Balso	Sourb Harutiun (St. Sahak)	1830 to 1863
9 Baralet	Sourb Khach (Sourb Astvatzatzin) St. Stepanos	1830 to 1855 1861
10 Bavra*	Sourb Khach	1830 to 1887
11 Bezhano (Chanchgha)	St. Minas	1830 to 1863
12 Bughashen	Sourb Harutiun	1830 to 1855
13 Burnashet	St. Matthew the Evangelist (St. Grigor Lusavorich?)	1830 to 1863
14 Buzavet	St. Grigor Lusavorich	1845 to 1868
15 Chamdura	Sourb Harutiun	1830s
16 Chiftlik	St. Gevorg	1830s
17 Dadesh	Sourb Astvatzatzin	1848 to 1861
18 Damala	Sourb Khach	1830 to 1845
19 Dilif	St. Gevorg Sourb Vardanants	1847 -
20 Diliska	St. Sargis	1830 to 1848
21 Drkna	Sourb Nshan	1840 to 1868
22 Ekhtila (Ikhtila)	St. Stepanos	1830s
23 Gandza	Sourb Astvatzatzin St. Karapet	1862 1864
24 Ghadolar	St. Grigor Narekatsi	1868
25 Ghaurma	Sourb Astvatzatzin	1862
26 Goman	Sourb Lusavorich	1847
27 Gumburdo	Sourb Hambardzman	1837

Settlements	Church Names	Year/s of Construction
28 Heshtia*	Sourb Astvatzamor	1856
29 Jigrashen	Sourb Hreshtakapet	1861
30 Kacho	St. Minas	1860s
31 Kartikam*	Sourb Astvatzatzin	1843
32 Kartzakh	St. Karapet	1830s
33 Kartzep	Unnamed	-
34 Khando	St. Mark the Evangelist	1830 to 39
35 Khertvis	St. Hovhannes	1860
36 Khezabavra*	Sourb Astvatzatzni Sourb Khach	1840 1900
37 Khojabek	St. Sargis	1861
38 Khorenia	Sourb Yerevman Khachi	1830s
39 Khospia	Sourb Arakelots	1830 to 1863
40 Khulgumo*	Sourb Astvatzamor	1856 to 1861
41 Kokia	St. Luke the Evangelist	?
42 Korkh	St. Stepanos	1830 to 1861
43 Kulikam	Sourb Yerrordutiun	1864 to 1871
44 Lomaturtskh	Sourb Amenaprkich	1840s
45 Majadia	Sourb Harutiun (St. Grigor Lusavorich)	1840s to 1860s
46 Mamzara	St. Grigor Lusavorich	1847
47 Merenia	Sourb Astvatzamor	1830s
48 Metz Aragyal	Sourb Khach	1863
49 Metz Gondura	Sourb Astvatzatzin St. Hakob	1867 1860s
50 Metz Khanchali	Sourb Astvatzatzin	1830 to 1864
51 Metz Samsar (Tok)	Sourb Astvatzatzin	1848 to 1861
52 Molit	St. Simon	1861

Settlements	Church Names	Year/s of Construction
53 Mragval	St. Sargis	?
54 Murjakhet	Sourb Varaga Khachi	1830s
55 Olaverd	Sourb Astvatzatzin	1856
56 Orja	Sts. Thaddaeus & Bartholomew	1830s
57 Orojalar	St. Hakob	1870
58 Poka	St. Grigor Lusavorich Sourb Nshan	Middle Ages 1862
59 Pokr Aragyal	Sourb Astvatzatzin St. Stepanos	1864 ?
60 Pokr Gondura	St. Ghevond	1861
61 Pokr Khanchali	St. Hakob	1864
62 Pokr Samsar	Sourb Harutiun	1860s
63 Satkha	Sourb Astvatzatzin (Metzn Nerses?)	1865
64 Sirk	St. Gevorg	1864
65 Sulda	Sourb Khach	1830s
66 Takhcha	St. Minas	1870
67 Toria (with Dzithank)*	St. Hovhannes Mkrtych	1803
68 Turtskh*	Sourb Astvatzamor	1856
69 Ujmana*	St. Hovhannes Mkrtych	1851
70 Vachian	Sourb Sion	1830s
71 Varevan*	Sourb Astvatzatzin	1842 to 1843
72 Zak	St. Minas	1830s

Akhalkalak and more than 10 Armenian Catholic villages of Akhaltskha were placed under the jurisdiction of the Catholic Primate of Akhaltskha. To keep them away from possible Roman influence, the Tsarist Government limited many of their rights. Their primate became merely an appointee. In the late 1830s, Poghos Shahkulian was appointed Primate of the Armenian Catholics of Akhaltskha.⁹⁷

From 1860 to 1870, the Georgian Orthodox Church started a movement to convert the Catholic Armenians to the "Georgian faith." Everywhere mass propaganda was launched, alleging that the majority of Catholic Armenians actually were Georgians, who first became Armenian-speaking under the influence of the Armenian Apostolic Church and then converted to Catholicism. While making such ridiculous and absurd assertions, however, the originators of this movement did not explain why the "Georgians" who were influenced by the Armenian Apostolic Church had preferred Catholicism over the Apostolic faith.

The first "victims" of this propaganda were the Catholic Armenians residing in Vel Village of Ardahan as well as in Kartikam, Bavra, Khulgumo, and, partly, Turtskh Villages of Javakhk. The choice of these villages was by no means accidental: the organizers of the campaign were convinced that they would be successful. They knew that the Catholic residents of the aforementioned places, who were partially Turkish-speaking, could easily oppose the Armenian Apostolic faith and adopt the Georgian creed. The propagandists assured L. Zagursky, who visited Akhalkalak District in 1872, that the original homeland of these people was Georgia, whence they had resettled in Ardahan, escaping persecution. There, amidst the Turkish-speaking residents, they had acquired the Turkish language.⁹⁸ These same propagandists, however, would not provide any explanation as to why the inhabitants of Vel had preserved the Armenian language alongside with Turkish; why they had kept their Armenian names, mode of life, Armenian Church rituals, and Armenian identity. What grounds did they have to "convert" these people? It is not surprising that the attempts of the Georgian clergymen and public figures to "re-Georgianize" the Armenians of Vel aroused their vexation and were met with a flat refusal. Despite that, however, the repulsive propaganda continued later.

Another important event in the spiritual life of the region was the return of the converted Muslim Armenians and Georgians to their origi-

nal faith: taking advantage of Baron Rozen's special order, a number of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak Armenians who had renounced their true religion but had retained their national identity were again baptized as Christian Armenians.⁹⁹

Cultural Life

After the immigration of Western Armenians, and the gradual stabilization of the economy of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak, these districts experienced cultural revival. Writing about the art of dance, Zh. Khachatrian points out that the period marked the creation of a unique culture which intertwined the elements of the cultural legacy of both the local Armenians and Erzurum emigrants.¹⁰⁰ It is important to note that this culture was not affected by foreign elements because the region was densely and predominantly inhabited by Armenians.

Early in the 1830s, Archbishop Karapet established the male parish schools of Karapetian and Mesropian in Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak respectively. The teaching staff of these institutions comprised a group of well-known teachers from Erzurum some of whom had gained wide pedagogical experience in Karapetian Gymnasium of Erzurum. Due to the lack of necessary support, these schools remained in deplorable conditions for a long time: there were no suitable buildings, textbooks, stationery, etc. The state of Karapetian School slightly improved after Archbishop Karapet had allocated part of the revenue received from the estates he had obtained to it.

Mesropian School started operating in the gavit of Sourb Khach Church, which was not suitable for that purpose at all. For a long time, it remained the only educational institution throughout the district and offered a more or less acceptable course of instruction to its pupils. It had 70 students in 1831. In the 1830s, several other schools opened among which can be mentioned those in Kartzakh (founded in 1836) and Aragova (established in 1836, or 1837).¹⁰¹

In the early 1860s, several steps were taken to improve the condition of Akhalkalak's school. At the beginning of 1862, Father

Stepanos Demirjoghlian, the Primate of Akhalkalak Diocese, applied to Hovhannes Hovhanjanian, an entrepreneur living in Moscow, for financial aid. The latter, who was the offspring of the Hovhanjanians' (Ohanjanians) Family and a great advocate of education, agreed to give 150 rubles per annum to the college. In February 1862, in a letter addressed to Father Stepanos, Ohanjanian wrote, "I cherish the hope that, under the auspices of your diligent leadership and that of the honorable citizens, the college will be able to yield the fruits the nation is longing for."¹⁰² In response to the petition of a group of Akhalkalak inhabitants, on October 20, 1863, Catholicos Mateos the First issued a bull ordering Archbishop Makar, the leader of the Georgian-Imeretian Diocese, to spend the income received from candle sales in Akhalkalak on sustaining the local school, instead of sending it to Tiflis for the famous Nersissian School.¹⁰³

Despite all these measures, however, the expenses of the school were only partly covered, and it was not able to overcome its financial predicament.

Between the 1860s and 1870s, the following colleges were established in Akhaltskha: Galfeyan (1864); Gagaziants (1871); Nor Arshaluys Saghatelian (December 1, 1868), as well as the National College of the Vardaniants (1866), and the female college of Yeghisabetian (March 9, 1870). Apart from these institutions, another 7 colleges functioned in the villages of Akhaltskha. On February 12, 1871, the first female school of Sandkhtian opened in the gavit of Akhalkalak's Sourb Khach Church.¹⁰⁴ In 1873 the Royal School of Baralet was founded with 30 pupils.¹⁰⁵

Mesropian School of Akhalkalak, which had 167 pupils and 8 teachers, had a budget of 1,200 rubles, of which 850 rubles were donated by Hovhanjanian and the locals, another 300 rubles being provided by Archbishop Karapet's will. In 1880 the people of Akhalkalak appealed to Catholicos Gevorg the Fourth to give their school another 1,000 rubles of the income received from the estates of Sourb Prkich

Church.¹⁰⁶ The issue, however, remained unresolved for a long time due to the impediments created by the Spiritual Leadership of Akhaltskha.

Sandkhtian Female School was in a grave financial predicament, too. Its budget was even scantier, only 500 rubles.

Another famous educational institution in the district was the female college of Burnashet, with a meager budget of 150 rubles. Each of the schools of Gandza, Satkha, Vachian, and Diliska had between 40 and 120 pupils on average.¹⁰⁷

Akhalkalak District in the Last Decades of the 19th Century and in the Early 20th Century.

Javakhk Inhabitants' Participation in the Western Armenian Liberation Movement

The Demographic Movements Observed in the District

In the 1880s, one of the peculiar features of the demographic development of Transcaucasia and the districts of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak was the drastic increase in the number of the Armenian population in the cities. This was primarily due to the rise and development of market relations. Gradually more and more Armenian merchants, craftsmen, and entrepreneurs moved to the cities, where great opportunities awaited them. This was particularly obvious in the provinces of Tiflis, Yelizavetpol, and Baku. With this regard, the Caucasian Calendar states, "The Armenians constitute a majority in all the cities of Tiflis Province. In Tiflis City they comprise almost half of the population (45 %), the other half being Georgians (26 %), Russians (24 %) and Tartars (5 %). In the other cities, the Armenians outnumber the Georgians. In Akhaltskha, for example, the Armenians make up 93 % of the population. Even in Telav and Segnakh, cities in

a purely Georgian country, the Armenian population constitutes 73 % and 89% respectively. In contrast to this, the villages of Telav and Segnakh represent quite the opposite picture: the 49,103 inhabitants of the former comprise only 2,869 (6 %) Armenians, and the 74,142 inhabitants of the latter 5,567 (7.5 %) Armenians."¹⁰⁸

As for the peasantry of Tiflis Province, the Armenians constituted an overwhelming majority in Historical Javakhk, Samtskhe, and Lori, as well as in the districts of Akhalkalak, Akhaltskha, and Borchalu.

Akhalkalak District did not undergo any serious territorial changes after its establishment: in the last decades of the 19th century, it covered an area of 2392.86 square versts (249,255 dessiatinas), or 2723.12 kilometres. The district was divided to two police municipalities: the center of the southern one was Bogdanovka, and that of the northern, Baralet. The police municipality of Bogdanovka was larger in territory, covering 1491.55 square versts, or 1697.41 square kilometres. Baralet reached 901.31 square versts, or 1025.71 square kilometres.¹⁰⁹ Each of these two police municipalities had 5 equal village communities, but Baralet, whose territory was smaller, had a denser population: out of the 110 villages of the whole district, 65 belonged to Baralet, and 45 to Bogdanovka.¹¹⁰

Before World War I, the different nationalities inhabiting the district represented the following demographical picture:

Table 5

Year ¹¹¹	Armenians	Georgians	Russians	Greeks	Jews	Muslims	Other	Total
1886	46,386	3,735	6,674,	102	53	6,824	14	63,788
1894	49,807	3,714	7,272	56	52	4,962 ¹¹²	6 Poles	65,869
1897	48,403	6,322	4,750	35	22	6,827	910 ¹¹³	67,269
1914	81,014	6,905 ¹¹⁴	7,185	-	-	3,036	19 Poles	98,159

The aforementioned data help us calculate what percentage each of the different nationalities of the district formed:

Table 6

Year	Armenians	Georgians	Russians	Greeks	Jews	Muslims	Other
1886	72.7%	5.8%	10.4%	0.1%	0.08%	10.7%	0.02%
1894	75.6%	5.6%	11%	0.08%	0.07%	7.5%	0.009%
1897	72%	9.3%	7%	0.05%	0.03%	10.1%	1.3%
1914	82.5%	7%	7.3%	-	-	3%	0.01%

It is obvious that the Armenians retained their constant numerical superiority. Thanks to the high birth rate prior to World War I, their relative number was 82.5 % of the entire population, while that of the Muslims diminished due to the continuous emigration. The percentage of the Georgian and Russian population was mostly stable, fluctuating between 6 % and 10 %. A considerable increase was noticeable in the number of the Georgians from 1894 to 1897, whereas that of the Russians drastically dropped at the same time: Lynch observed this fact during his visit to Akhalkalak in the late 1890s.¹¹⁵

In the 1880s, the Armenian settlements having more than a thousand inhabitants amounted to 14. In 1885 some of the largest Armenian villages represented the following picture with regard to their population:

Alastan - 1,298;

Gumburdo - 1,121;

Heshtia - 1,546;

Kartzakh - 1,612;

Satkha - 1,374;

Vachian - 1,276.¹¹⁶

As for Khertvis, the continuous emigration of the local Armenian population to the villages of the district converted this fortress town into a township inhabited mainly by Sunni Muslims. Meanwhile, Khertvis had only 1,314 Turkish Meskhetians, who still preserved their memories of once being Christians. In 1890 55 of the district villages had a population comprising 50 households; in 33 of these, the number of the families fluctuated between 50 and

100; twenty of the villages had a population of 100 to 200 families, and in 2 villages, the inhabitants consisted of more than 200 households.¹¹⁷

In the early 1880s, the lack of lands compelled the entire population of Chiftlik, Modigya, and Khumris Villages, about 130 families, as well as 52 families (435 people) from the Russian Dukhobors' villages, to emigrate to the newly-conquered marz of Kars.¹¹⁸ The inhabitants of Chiftlik, located 1 to 1.5 kilometres west of Akhalkalak City, on the left bank of the stream Karasnaghbyur, emigrated to Mazra Village of Kars, this being instigated by the authorities. The site of the village was used for the construction of a station for the Russian troops; soon the whole garrison of the semi-destroyed fort moved there.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Akhalkalak was gradually acquiring the image of a city. In the northern part of the Central Street, a Russian church was erected through Stepanos Ananikian's efforts. The surroundings of Sourb Khach Church and the Armenian schools functioning in its gavit were improved. Near this church, at the western extremity of the street intersecting the Central Street, at the crossing of several streets, the City Park was founded in 1880: the people of Akhalkalak tenderly called it *Khas Bakhcha*. The park was 40 sazhen (85.3 meters) long and 22 sazhen and one arshin (about 47.6 meters) wide. It had a fence and was planted with trees. A traveler passing through Akhalkalak in 1885 wrote, "The buildings of the city, which are erected of finely-finished stone and lime, are separated by regular wide streets."¹¹⁹

In 1912 Gaspar Shahparonian and his son Vardan Shahparonian built the first hydroelectric station in Akhalkalak on the river Taparvan. They also built a watermill as well as a meat factory and mills processing oil, soap, and wood. It was through their efforts that the new building of the local parish school opened in 1912.¹²⁰ In 1890 Akhalkalak was given the status of second-class city. In 1896 it was granted municipal autonomy.

The following table reflects the ethnic make-up and displacements of the population of Akhalkalak City.

Table 7

Year ¹²¹	Armenian	Georgian	Russian	Greek	Jew	Muslim	Other	Total
1886	4,079	45	61	40	53	15	10	4,303
1894	4,290	48	55	29	52	22	6 (Poles)	4,502
1897	4,136	129	703 ¹²²	40	189	44	199	5,440
1914 ¹²³	6,697	262+35= 297 ¹²⁴	284	-	-	35	6	7,284

This table leads us to the following conclusions: first, both in the entire district and Akhalkalak City, the Armenians constantly maintained their numerical dominance over the other nationalities. In the thirty years following 1894, the growth of the Armenians constituted more than 50 %; the Russian population increased for five times, and the Georgians for more than 6 times. The point is that during that period, gradually more and more Russian and Georgian officials were appointed in the district authorities, while the region was always predominantly Armenian-populated. The discriminatory policies against the Armenians become clearly apparent from the names of the appointed officials and their national identity recorded in the annual volumes of the Caucasian Calendar.

It is interesting to note that the municipal budget of Akhalkalak was in far better condition than those of the other cities in Tiflis Province. In this regard, the Caucasian Calendar reads, "All the cities in Tiflis Province are buried in debts, except for Akhalkalak, which has a surplus of 23 thousand rubles."¹²⁵ However, this does not speak of the prosperity of the city at all; since Akhalkalak represented a small town, it had modest needs which were often neglected by the authorities so that the budget was in a seemingly good condition.

The severe natural disaster that befell the district at the end of the century had a great influence on its demographical make-up. On December 19, 1899, a severe earthquake struck the district, with its epicentre in Merenia Village. Particularly heavy damage was inflicted upon about 30 villages in the north of the district; in certain villages the number of the

fatalities amounted to 10 % of the entire population. The earthquake caused the death of 86 people in Merenia; 48 in Bezhano; 46 in Metz Samsar; 27 in Pokr Samsar, and 14 in Agana, the number of the victims amounting to 248 in only 28 villages. These 28 villages had 2,043 private houses built of mud with some insignificant exceptions: of these 672, i.e. about one third, were reduced to ruins. Out of the 15,140 head of animals, 2,357 were killed. Only very few houses remained semi-standing. In the villages that are mentioned below the number of the ruined houses was as follows: Ekhtila - 69 out of the total of 72; Pokr Samsar - 51 out of 54; Bezhano - 117 out of 125; Balkho - 45 out of 48; Merenia - 117 out of 130; Drkna - 19 out of 21; Lomaturtskh - 19 out of 26, and Pokrik Sirg - 10 out of 10.¹²⁶ The churches of the district suffered severe damage, too.

So heavy was the harm inflicted by this natural calamity that its news reached St. Petersburg, the capital of the Russian Empire. Tsar Nicholas II issued a circular and allocated a certain sum to the victims' fund from his own means. Armenian Catholicos Mkrtych Khrimian gave a considerable amount of money from the budget of the Holy See of Ejmiatzin. He ordered the Primate of the Georgian-Armenian Diocese to allocate 1,000 rubles from the diocese budget and ordered all the other dioceses to raise money for that purpose.¹²⁷ The victims of the earthquake also received considerable funds from some Pan-Russian and Pan-Caucasian charitable organizations.

The Socio-Cultural Life of the District

In the 1880s, the tranquility of Akhalkalak District community was disturbed by a new infringement of the Georgian Orthodox Church on the Armenians. In 1883 arguments were rekindled over the national and religious identity of the populations of Kartikam, Bavra, and Khulgumo. Once again the peasantry protested against the infringements, and a couple of state committees were sent there. Making threats and offering bribes, these committees managed to squeeze out "information" from some people who "confessed" that they had adopted Orthodoxy in 1841 and had actually been "Georgians" before that. However, the overwhelm-

ing majority of the villagers put up resistance against the Georgian chauvinists' claims, flatly refusing to renounce their religion and nationality in any way.

During the population census of 1886, Governor of Akhalkalak District Sumbatov (Sumbatashvili) made another attempt to register the inhabitants of the aforementioned villages as "Georgians." "However," as Ycr. Lalayan writes, "only a single family agreed to register as Georgian out of fear. The others said that they were Armenians."¹²⁸ For the time being, the Georgian officials had to forget the problem, leaving it to the scholars' "study."

In the mid-1890s, the diocese of Akhalkalak and Tzalka was divided into Eastern and Western parts, Tzalka forming part of the Eastern Diocese. In the late 19th century, the number of the Armenian Apostolic and Armenian Catholic churches in Akhaltskha and Tzalka exceeded 100. Part of these churches were in ruins, so many villages embarked on constructing new ones.¹²⁹ In the second half of the 19th century, Senior Priests Stepanos Demirjoghlian and Hovhannes Kajaznuni were distinguished among the diocese primates of Akhalkalak. The latter was the father of Hovhannes Kajaznuni, the future first Prime Minister of the first Republic of Armenia, who had taken his father's name without any changes.¹³⁰

Certain activities were observed in the social life of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak in the summer of 1895, when Catholicos of All Armenians Mkrtych Khrimian visited these districts. The Supreme Pontiff had previously gone to Russia to discuss some reform issues with the Russian officials and seek protection for the Western Armenians who had suffered massacres by the Ottoman Empire. On his way back to Echmiatzin, he visited Borzhom, where he met Great Prince Nikolai Mikhailovich. The Catholicos was received in great splendor both in Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak. In Akhalkalak he spent a night with one of the local patriarchal families, under the roof of Hajji Mare's traditional home.¹³¹ Everywhere Khrimian was received with the utmost enthusiasm. The villagers handed him petitions

telling him about their hard living conditions and complaining of the local priests' illiteracy.¹³²

The 1880s marked a number of pivotal events in the cultural and educational life of Akhalkalak District: a Russian school opened there in the early 1880s; a Municipal College opened in quite a comfortable building in 1889; new schools were established in Gandza, Kartzakh, Vachian, and Agana in 1881; Damala and Gom in 1882; Olaverd and Lomaturtskh in 1883, and Chamdura, Khando, Ghaurma, and Jigrashen in 1884. Some of these schools were merely winter schools with a single teacher, and 20 to 30 pupils. In the late 1880s, the 15 villages of the entire district -not counting the schools of Akhalkalak City- had more than one thousand pupils, including only 48 girls.¹³³

Along with spiritual and church schools, the Public Reading Hall began functioning on May 24, 1880. The main purpose of its establishment was to provide the necessary literature for the district's inhabitants in general and pupils in particular. In the first years of its activity, its Administration had to rent two rooms a long distance away from the church due to the lack of a proper building. With a budget of 300 rubles, they paid 80 rubles as a rent.

In 1885 the Executive Committee of the Reading Hall petitioned Bishop Aristakes, the Primate of the Georgian-Imeretian Diocese, for permission to have a two-room additional building of 21 sazhen \bar{s} erected in the northwest of Sourb Khach Church, neighboring the Demirjoghlians' house in the west, and Jrkirneri Poghots in the north. The local residents raised some money for that purpose and "honorable Hovhannes Ter-Kirakossian, a respected citizen descending from a traditional family, committed himself to providing the stones necessary for the building."¹³⁴

However, both the construction of this building and the renovation of a unisex college to be carried out by Akhalkalak citizen Hakob Darbinian (it was to finish in 1884) were temporarily cancelled. In 1885 the authorities, among the other Armenian schools, closed the schools of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak, the reopening of which came in September

1886.¹³⁵ In the 1890s, the financial condition of Sourb Khach Church improved to some extent: in 1893, the church had 20 market-stands in Akhalkalak City: most of them were rented, with the income received being used for the improvement of the conditions of the schools and the Reading Hall, as well as for student scholarships and other purposes.

Even with such financial conditions and a low level of education, these schools played a great role in educating the Armenians of the district. The teachers of Akhalkalak's parish school included historian Yegh. Geghamiants, ethnographer Yer. Lalayan as well as Avetik Araskhanian, the editor of the newspaper Murj. Among its students were writers Derenik Demirjian and Vahan Terian,¹³⁶ political figures Hamo Ohanjanian, Ruben Ter-Minassian, Ruben Darbinian and others.

Responding to the request of 28 individuals from Akhalkalak, on January 21, 1890, the Council of the Armenian Charity Society of Caucasia gave permission to have its branch established in Akhalkalak. The founding meeting of this branch was held under Senior Priest Khoren Barseghian's chairmanship. Its Executive Committee comprised Abraham Yeritspokhian (President), Jalal Ter-Grigorian (Secretary), and Harutiun Harutiunian. Soon the number of the members of this branch grew from 23 to 60. It became particularly active when Ter-Grigorian became first its vice-president and then president. The Society, which aided the local schools as well as the poor and the sick, made attempts to open a workshop for poor children and orphans. The authorities, however, did not permit this.¹³⁷ The Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak branches of the Charity Society carried out great work particularly between 1895 and 1896, administering relief to and providing shelter for the Western Armenian immigrants who had escaped the massacres.

The intertwinement of the best national traditions and customs of the native people with those of the Western Armenian immigrants resulted in quite a distinctive culture in Javakhk. This was particularly visible in dance choreography and minstrel songs.¹³⁸ The first representatives of Javakhk minstrels were Matin and Sukhani, who descended from families that had emigrated from Erzurum villages in

1830. Soon Siayi (Ghazar Karapetian, born in Kartzakh Village), Tifili (Yegho Manoukian, Sulda Village), Firaghi (Margar Papoyan, Dadesh Village), and others joined them in creating minstrel songs.¹³⁹ Amongst the local minstrels, special mention should be made of Jivani (Serob Levonian, born in Kartzakh Village, 1846 to 1909), who became one of the most outstanding personalities in the Armenian art of music. He left a rich musical legacy, consisting of more than 800 songs and hundreds of poems. He devoted a special place to his native Javakhk in his works.

At the end of the 19th century and, especially, at the beginning of the 20th century, a great number of prominent personalities from Javakhk began working in literary and cultural life both in Akhalkalak and outside its borders. They included Arshak Madoyan (Seylan), Derenik Demirjian, Vardan Shahparonian, ethnographer Yervand Lalayan, Ghazar Ter-Grigorian (Javakhetsy), the brother of Vahan Terian, poet Vahan Terian, publicists Bagrat Pijikian and Poghos Abelian, historian Yeghishe (Hovakim) Geghamiants, Jalal Ter-Grigorian (Salyumian), who was from Artsakh in origin, and others.

Parallel with his national and public activity, Seylan wrote a great number of fictional, scientific and historiographical works, these last ones being devoted to Western Armenia and his native Javakhk.

In 1895 and 1901, great Armenian poet Hovhannes Tumanian visited Javakhk, accompanied by the local intellectuals: Jalal Ter-Grigorian, Grigor Vantsian, Sedrak Aghabalian, Vardan Shahparonian, Ghazar Javakhetsy, and others. He visited Akhalkalak, Tmkaberd, Parvana, and a number of villages, walked in the gorges of the streams Taparvan and Karasnaghbyur as well as in the vicinity of Tavshan Tapa hill, which was covered with flowers. A solemn reception was held in Tumanian's honor in Akhalkalak. His visits of Javakhk¹⁴⁰ inspired him to write his famous poem entitled *The Conquest of Tmuk Fort* and the legend *Parvana*. The Poet of All Armenians was well-acquainted with many intellectuals from Javakhk whom he had previously met in Tiflis. Now he grew even more attached to the literary circles of this region, which he himself referred to

as the “Biblical Eden.” Tumanian rendered great assistance to the young writers of Javakhk.

Sandkhtian Female School had an important role in the development of theatrical art in Akhalkalak. Many performances were staged in its large hall built in the 1890s, with a considerable part of the income received being used for charity purposes.

Javakhk and the Armenian National Liberation Movement

After the Conference of Berlin, tangible development was observed in the Armenian national, political, and social life in Akhalkalak District. The compassionate attitude of Javakhk Armenians towards their compatriots in Western Armenia was manifested in 1879, when an all-Armenian movement began to administer relief to the famine-stricken inhabitants of Van.¹⁴¹ In the 1890s, through the efforts of J. Ter-Grigorian and P. Abelian, a liberation group was established,¹⁴² and Hay Heghapokhakan Dashnaktsutium as well as the Socialist Revolutionaries started extending their activities there. Dashnaktsutium prioritized the national issues and found many followers in Javakhk, while the Social Revolutionaries emphasized the land problems of the peasantry.

The study of the available documents reveals that the ideas of liberating Western Armenia were warmly welcomed by Akhalkalak Armenians, a considerable part of whom were from Western Armenia and still retained spiritual ties with their former homeland, i.e. Erzurum Province. According to a report by the head of Akhalkalak District, in January of 1891, two revolutionary preachers wandered throughout Javakhk, appealing to the local inhabitants to support the liberation struggle of their compatriots who were Turkish subjects, partake in raising funds, or take up arms and join the Western Armenians' uprisings. These figures managed to recruit volunteers who were to go to Western Armenia and organize the liberation struggle on the spot. According to the District Head, such a success was motivated by the fact that a great number of local inhabitants, particularly, city dwellers dreamed of restoring the Armenian kingdom.¹⁴³

The efforts of M. Javjavadze, Police Chief of Bogdanovka, to find the political activists proved to be futile. With the help of some locals, especially, Artashes Vardanians from Pokr Gondura, the aforementioned preachers succeeded in moving to the neighboring district of Alexandropol. A group of people, including Father Stepan Arvanian, his son-in-law Shahbazian, Doctor Arshak, and two of the inhabitants of Dadesh Village, i.e. Doctor Dali Keshish Karshian and Father Karapet, were arrested, accused of having supported the "mutineers." Especially active were Father Stepan's son, i.e. notary Arvanian as well as Hmayak Aghegian, a teacher from the school of Vachian, and Bagrat Pijikian from Akhalkalak City, a famous public and political figure, journalist, and the former clerk of Diliska community. The authorities were convinced that these people were members of an "Armenian secret committee" and had established a branch of that organization in the district. In punishment for these alleged activities, the local police expelled H. Aghegian and B. Pijikian from the district, launched state propaganda to suppress Akhalkalak Armenians' "extreme patriotism," and imposed large fines on those who had contacts with the revolutionaries and refused to provide the authorities with information regarding their activities. It was particularly notary Arvanov's activity that seemed utterly unforgivable, since he "has taken steps contradicting the official viewpoints of the Russian Government even though he wears a Russian official's hat."¹⁴⁴ |

The Tsarist Government was not able to uproot the newly-founded Dashnak organization in Akhalkalak District. It is not surprising that soon Javakhk gave this party a large number of prominent members. It became a common practice for entire families to be party "soldiers." Among them were the Hovhanjanians (Ohanjanians), the Ter-Minassians, and the Igitians (Igitkhanians, Kajaznunis). One of the members of the Ohanjanians' large family, Hamazasp, known as Hamo (born in Akhalkalak City in 1873), soon gained great popularity, becoming one of the leading figures of the party. His brother Armen, who enjoyed fame with the Russian revolutionaries, was killed in the struggle for his nation's liberation. Satenik, Hamo's sister, earned the name of a beloved

female revolutionary. She protected Dashnak leader Jalal Ter-Grigorian and his friends, who were persecuted by the Russian authorities.¹⁴⁵

Dashnaktsutjun became stronger in Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak particularly in the early 20th century. The fund-raising, aimed at organizing and financing the Western Armenian armed groups, yielded considerable amounts of money kept in the hands of the local public figures. Thus, in 1904 the joint organization of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak had 32,000 francs at its disposal, whereas the responsible body in Cilicia had 16,000. that in America 15,000, in Baku 125,000, and in Tiflis, Gandzak, and Shushi together 385,000 francs. Besides, Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak were expected to allocate another 10,000 francs in the same year mainly for the realization of an act called Potorik (the Armenian equivalent for 'Storm'). During this operation, Torgom and Menak were to lead 26 fighters to Sasun. This group was the only one that successfully arrived in Sasun.¹⁴⁶

Gradually the Armenians of Akhalkalak strengthened their ties with their Western Armenian brothers living on the other side of the border. These ties were beyond spiritual bonds and were manifested through practical steps. In the early 1890s, a large number of Akhalkalak and Akhaltskha people, sharing the enthusiasm that had engulfed especially the youth of that time, joined the armed groups organized everywhere and moved to Western Armenia, where they participated in the armed struggle against the Turkish tyranny.

The active participation of Caucasian Armenians in the Western Armenians' struggle for freedom is documented in vast historiographical literature. Although the biographies of the hayduks seldom provide information about their real names, surnames, and birthplaces, the available scanty data make it possible to form a general idea about the activities of a group of fidayis from Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak.

As is known, the first practical step taken by the Armenians of Caucasia for the expansion of the liberation struggle in Western Armenia was Sargis Kukunian's military campaign in 1890. With this regard, Michael Varandian writes, "The group consisted of Armenian soldiers

from the Russian army and a sergeant named Stepan from Akhaltskha: he taught the volunteers whatever was necessary."¹⁴⁷

In 1892, when famous fidayi leader Arabo came to Tiflis to participate in the First World Congress of Hay Heghapokhakan Dashnaktsutiu, many young Caucasian Armenians asked him to be recruited into his detachment and be taken to Western Armenia. Rejecting many of them, Arabo chose only a few Western Armenian volunteers: Melkon from Khnus, Avo from Mush, Marto, and others, with whom he went to Ergir (or Yerkir, literally meaning 'country.' Used to denote Historical Western Armenia) in 1893. At that time, the dominating thought was that the fidayis' struggle against Turkish tyranny was the problem of Western Armenians only. However, an exception was made for Vardan and Levon, both from Akhaltskha, probably, because their ancestors were from Erzurum. Arabo's 16-member detachment engaged in a battle against Kurds and Turks on the border of Taron, in the gorge of Gyalisor (Arash): all the fidayis, including Vardan from Akhaltskha, died heroically beside Arabo.¹⁴⁸

In the first half of the 1890s, the ideas of liberating the historical Armenian homeland from the Turkish yoke were quite widespread in Javakhk. Everywhere, in Mesropian School, the Municipal Library and even during theatrical performances, everyone talked about the imperative of committing themselves to the struggle of liberating Armenia. The progressive ideas printed in the press of Tiflis were widely discussed by the youth and intellectuals alike. Mesropian Parish School was particularly actively involved in these discussions.

Discussions on Ergir became more frequent especially in 1894, when the first Western Armenian refugees, 350 in number, reached Akhalkalak having miraculously escaped the Turkish yataghan (*a Turkish sword with a double-curved blade*). The locals gave them a cordial welcome and helped in accommodating them both in the city and villages like Gumburdo, Aragova, Orja, and others. Funds were raised through the endeavors of the branch of the Armenian Charity Society of Caucasias.¹⁴⁹ Some of the male refugees started participating in the construction of mil-

itary buildings as quarry workers, receiving meager payment. A group of pupils of the parish school, including 12-year-old Minas (later Ruben Ter-Minassian, one of the renowned figures of the liberation struggle), Paruyr, Baghdik, and others, used to visit the refugees and listen to their stories about the dreadful massacres launched by Sultan Hamid. Ruben was particularly heavily impressed by one of the refugees working in the quarry. Seeing the young fellows, the man remembered his laj (lad - H. M.). To Ruben's question what a laj was, the Turkish Armenian answered, "My son, who was as handsome as you. Oh God, what's happened to him?"¹⁵⁰

The teens, along with 11 year-old Artashes (Chilingarian, later Ruben Darbinian, a Dashnak -A. M.), who had returned to his native city from Yekaterinodar, decided "to avenge, liberate Armenia and leave for Ergir." Acquiring "weapons" that comprised gunpowder and knives, they chose pseudonyms for themselves, like Raffi's (a famous novelist of the 19th century - H.M.) heroes and headed for the Russo-Turkish border.¹⁵¹ The young boys' noble outburst was unsuccessful and was prevented. but being something very typical of that period, it left a profound influence on both the participants and the district's youth. A special song was written about that "invasion," the youth singing it with great enthusiasm and the adults joking about it.¹⁵² Later R. Darbinian recalled this event in the following way, "In those days, not only the Armenian youth in Caucasia but also the youngsters and even children aged 10 to 12 dreamt of going to Armenia. Although living on the territory of Eastern Armenia, all of them believed that Armenia proper was situated on the other side of the Russian border, i.e. Western Armenia. That is why, they strove to go there to render assistance to their brothers and sisters suffering under the bloody Turkish yoke."¹⁵³ As Darbinian states, that "frustrated childish" incident was to become Ruben Ter-Minassian's first, but deeply-realized step in his future fervent revolutionary activity.

Ridiculous as it was, that infantile game caused quite a stir among the local authorities, and even the District Head was involved in its "investigation." According to Satenik Ohanjanian, it was very hard to prevent the

school from being closed. Interrogations and searches were carried out in some places, including the Ohanjanians' house. Unwilling to believe that the incident was merely the young boys' plan, the police attempted to accuse the school principal, Khachatur Dilanian, and the teachers of having organized it themselves.

In the late 19th century, other Armenians from Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak joined the struggle for the liberation of Western Armenia. Among those who moved to Ergir from Akhaltskha were young Dashnak Shamil (Tigran Okonian), Hajji Levon (Levon Khezarian), Usul Khecho (Khachatur Ter-Karapetian), and others, who were going to get involved in stormy revolutionary activities. In the summer of 1897, one of them, Khecho, distinguished for his bravery, took part in the invasion of Khanasor organized by Nikol Duman, Vardan (Sargis Mehrabian), Ishkhan Arghutian, and other prominent haydook leaders. Through this incursion, the fidayis took revenge on the Kurdish tribe of Mazrik for the pogrom they had perpetrated against the participants of Van's self-defence in 1896. Michael Varandian writes the following about the victims of Khanasor: "Nineteen brave warriors lost their lives on their native land during that fighting, nineteen martyrs from all over the Armenian land.... Fighters from Van, Shatakh, Hamadan, Mush, Goghtn, Ghazakh, Ghezlar, Nor Bayazet, Alexandropol, Tiflis, Gharabagh, Akhaltskha, Akhalkalak, etc."¹⁵⁴

Among the huge number of Akhalkalak Armenians who participated in the liberation struggle of Armenia in the early 20th century, stands out Ruben Ter-Minassian, a young man at the time. After graduating from Gevorgian Jemaran (*an institution of higher religious education in Echmiatzin*), he met his elder brother Harutiun's childhood friend Hamo Ohanjanian, now a famous Dashnak, in Tiflis in 1902. Upon the latter's advice, he assumed a party assignment in Batum, where the Armenians constituted more than 50% of the population; among them the Armenians from Akhalkalak formed a considerable number. Together with several of his compatriots, Ruben was entrusted with the responsible task of providing money for the Western Armenian armed groups. Two years later, he

continued his revolutionary activity in Kars, where he moved his large family. In that revolutionary crucible, Ruben also cooperated with Sergeï, i.e. Aram Manoukian.

The joint efforts of Aram and Ruben fostered the strengthening of the Central Committee of Dashnaksutiun in Kars. It mostly included people of Western Armenian origin. "Due to this fact, the Central Committee consisted either of locals or people from Akhalkalak and Alexandropol who were known to its members and came from Bardzr Hayk, i.e. they were the representatives of the same nation. This made the Central Committee to be long lasting and loyal to traditions."¹⁵⁵

Ruben's younger brother Yervand was recruited to the Committee of Kars, too; his elder brother, businessman Harutiun, who was not a party member, helped the party financially. In the spring of 1904, Ruben and Nikol Duman went to Persia and then, in the summer, to Western Armenia.¹⁵⁶

In 1903, with the sultan's government's intensification of control over Sasun, ever longing for freedom, many Caucasian Armenian figures were compelled to send armed detachments to Yerkir. Torgom's (Touman Toumian) 23-member group called *Mrrik* reached Sasun successfully, this glorious arrival causing great enthusiasm among Sasun Armenians. Besides famous Keri and Turbakh, the detachment also included Artashes from Akhalkskha and Nikol (Javakhetsy Nikol) from Akhalkalak.¹⁵⁷ The former was killed in the vicinity of Bitlis; the latter spent all his life in partisan fighting and prisons.

However, not all the haydook groups managed to reach Sasun without any losses; moreover, in certain cases, they suffered grave fatalities when engaging in heavy battles against the Turkish and Kurdish troops and sometimes the detachments of the Russian frontier guards supporting them. One of the detachments, consisting of about 150 mounted and unmounted haydooks led by Khan and Nevruz, crossed the Turkish border from Kars Marz in 1903 and was encircled by Turkish armed forces, far outnumbering them, in Deli-Baba, Gomadzor, and Youzveran Villages of Basen. The enemy opened heavy gunfire on Nevruz's unmounted sol-

diers. "Shek Hamo from Javakhk, who had earned a high rank in the Russian army and was now the only hope of the group," encouraged his friends, calling upon them not to yield up to despair and dig trenches to shelter themselves. After a long bombardment of the haydooks' positions, three enemy columns began storming them, thinking that all of them had been killed. The Turkish troops were only within 200 steps of the fidayis when Hamo's order was heard and the enemy came under severe fire. The Turkish soldiers, who had been taken aback, retreated, suffering a great number of fatalities. Some of the encouraged volunteers suggested counterattacking them, but Hamo forbade it, saying that they should sing together a famous haydook song instead.

Contrary to the fidayis' expectations, the government troops, who had received reinforcement, launched a general attack the following day. Khan's horsemen, who had lost touch with Nevruz's unmounted soldiers, could escape and save themselves, but they did not leave the battlefield. Encircled by the enemy, the leaders of the invasion were killed at the bloody battle together with many fighters, including Shek Hamo from Akhalkalak. Later Mekhchonts Margar and other combatants who had had a miraculous escape from a very certain death told Nikol Duman that Shek Hamo had been one of the most valorous warriors and had fought for quite a long time. "Not only was he courageous, but he also deeply realized their situation and did not lose bravery."¹⁵⁸

The enemy lost 800 soldiers at that battle. The Armenian side had between 4 and 5 heavily wounded volunteers, including Javakhetsy Nikol and Usul Khecho from Akhalkskha as well as prominent warriors from Torgom's group Mrrik, who had been taken captive. The Turkish authorities imprisoned them in Erzurum but, fortunately, both of them managed to be released and continue their revolutionary struggle. Again joining the armed detachments and arms-supplying groups, they were recruited into the Armenian volunteer detachments during World War I.¹⁵⁹

At the beginning of the 20th century, Akhalkalak and Akhalkskha Armenians played a major role in the acquisition and delivery of arms. One of the most famous centers of procuring arms to be sent to Western

Armenia was Alexandropol, where a Russian garrison was stationed. Dashnaksutiun Party paid greater attention to this issue at the beginning of the century, when both the Western and Eastern Armenians' persecutions grew particularly severe. It is not accidental at all that the local Dashnak Committee had accumulated a considerable number of weapons on account of those secretly purchased or directly stolen from the barracks of Akhalkalak and Alexandropol. Part of these arms was sent to Western Armenia, the others being distributed to the district's villages.

On June 12, 1903, the Tsarist Government issued a law on the confiscation of the property of the Armenian Church. It aroused a wave of protest everywhere, including Akhalkalak, since that directly meant the closing of the local spiritual schools: most of them were sustained on account of the church estates, especially, the lands belonging to Sourb Khach Church. Fortunately, the Dashnak Committee of Akhalkalak ordered the local population to abstain from resorting to arms, which could result in great bloodshed.

On Sunday, August 24, a vast multitude held a rally in token of mass protest. In this regard, Varandian writes, "Early in the morning, the city was flooded by thousands of peasants coming in groups from the nearby villages. The crowd consisted of priests, vergers, numerous women and children, the inhabitants of each village having brought their written complaints addressed to the Armenian Catholicos."¹⁶⁰ The demonstrators who had gathered in the yard of Sourb Khach Church and the adjacent streets amounted to six thousand. The sextons refused to mention the emperor during the mass liturgy, while the speakers condemned the authorities' anti-Armenian policy in their passionate speeches. They gave a solemn promise to "protect our centuries-old rights at the cost of our lives." The police did not dare to ban the rally, fearing that it would instigate bloody skirmishes.

During the anti-tsarist measures taken between 1903 and 1904, the Dashnaks of Akhalkalak and Akhalkalak made new attempts to procure ammunition, taking advantage of the chaos dominating in the entire

empire. They came to agreement with a secret group working in Alexandropol and headed by outstanding figure Padvali Vagho. In 1904 they stole a large number of arms from the local Russian barracks through joint efforts. Vagho, the main organizer of that dangerous act that lasted for a whole month, was assisted by Svaztsi Bidza (Harutiun), a certain Hakob from Gyumri, his friend, i.e. experienced fidayi Usul Khecho, as well as Hajji Levon and Ashik, who had recently returned to Akhaltskha from Western Armenia. Not only were the weapons taken out of the depots through their help, but they were also sent to Yerkir and different Transcaucasian regions loaded on 30 carts. During the Armeno-Tatar fights of 1905 to 1906, these arms were used for the self-defence of the Armenian populations of the Transcaucasian cities,¹⁶¹ with Usul Khecho taking an active part in this.

Encouraged by the good luck they had had in the seizure of weapons from the military depots and their successful delivery, Hajji Levon,¹⁶² Usul Khecho, Ashik (Asheg), Aslan, and others decided to establish a separate detachment mainly comprising Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak Armenians, and go to Yerkir, following the example of many others. It was determined to enter Vaspurakan via Persia, the route of Persia-Vaspurakan being the most reliable of the roads that could be used to convey arms to Western Armenia. The road of Basen, leading to the Turkish frontier in Kars Marz, had grown dangerous as a result of the Turkish and Russian authorities' cooperation.

In the first half of April, Hajji Levon's horsemen arrived in Salmast, where their group was joined by Van Armenians well familiar with Yerkir. On April 17 they crossed the Persian-Turkish border, but on the second day of the invasion, appeared some friendly Kurds, telling them that the authorities had set a trap for them so that they had to go back. However, the fidayis' dignity and self-esteem preventing them from turning back, they decided to break through the ring of Sultan Hamid's troops and advance. Managing to overcome the Kurds' resistance, the haydoos reached Lim Village lying to the northeast of Van, but they came under heavy enemy fire there. Some of their horses were killed, the others were

shot by the fidayis themselves so that the enemy would not take possession of them, and all the fighters could move on stealthily. Hovhannes from Van, Joj Agha, and others were killed,¹⁶³ but despite that, Akhhaltskha Armenians' risky undertaking was a success. The group reached Varag Monastery taking a certain amount of munitions with them.

In the late 19th century, Sarbaz Khecho from Daralagyaz (he was from Malishka Village in origin) and Akhalkalak inhabitants Grish and Suren gained high popularity with the arms-supplying groups working in Persian Armenia (Persarmenia, as called by the Romans), Khoy, Salmast, Maku, i.e. in the historical field of Avarayr. Being former non-commissioned officers from the cavalry of the Russian army, Grish and Suren, who were often called *Javakhetsy*, were experienced specialists well-familiar with different kinds of weapons. Having resigned from military service, they moved to Persian Armenia, committing themselves to the vital work of supplying arms for the haydook groups in Ergir together with Sarbaz Khecho. When Ruben Ter-Minassian, who had arrived in Persia to go to Yerkir, asked them why they had given up military work, Suren and Grish got insulted and answered that they could not serve in the Russian army "ignoring the martyrdom for the sake of their nation." As Ruben testifies, "They had already gained popularity in the old Armenian districts of Her, Zarevand, and Artaz. Not only were they engaged in transporting our party belongings from the Russian borders to Vaspurakan's, but they had also become a true scourge for the bandits blocking the communication ways and hampering the traffic."¹⁶⁴ It is not accidental at all that it was especially Sarbaz Khecho, Grish, and Suren who were almost always entrusted with the difficult work of conveying arms through the Persian-Turkish border. Moreover, many heads of caravanserais, postal employees, and even some Persian and Turkish state bodies applied to them for the conveyance of their property, the three companions enjoying great popularity not only among the officials of both countries but also with the Kurdish gangs reigning in the border zone. As a rule, they successfully

carried out safe conveyance of ammunition to Vaspurakan among other luggage.

In the spring of 1904 (presumably, in late March or early in April), began an influx of armed groups into Western Armenia for the special purpose of rendering aid to insurgent Sasun. Sarbaz Khecho's group joined Nikol Duman, who organized an invasion from Persia to Yerkir together with Kosti Hambardzumian, Dashnak Khecho, Ruben Ter-Minassian, Hakob Zavriyan, and other figures. In June the 17-member group crossed the Kotur Mountains, after which they were caught in a trap on the road to Varag, near Razi. A fierce battle was engaged: later it came to be known as the battle of Razi. Grish was singing to encourage his companions-in-arms in the positions. Thanks to Sarbaz and his faithful friends' valor, the detachment succeeded in retreating towards the Persian border, whence they reached Salmast in several groups, suffering small fatalities. Ruben played an instrumental role in saving the group from most certain extermination.¹⁶⁵

Early in May, the fidayis in Salmast and Khoys received the news of the suppression of the revolt of Sasun and the subsequent dreadful massacres. Fearing that fidayi Andranik's and his friends' arrival from Sasun to Vaspurakan might induce new slaughters for them as well, the Armenians of Van turned to the haydooks in Salmast for help. Despite the fact that Nikol Duman regarded any invasion as disastrous due to the intensified road control, Pokhik (Vahram Hovhannissian, from Shatakh in origin), one of the leading fidayis working in Salmast, decided to take one of the groups to Van. In order to carry out that daring initiative, he asked Nikol Duman to put Platoon Commander Javakhetsy Suren at his disposal, since the latter was keen on military work. Nikol agreed and for the first time, Suren was obliged to part with his loyal friends Sarbaz Khecho and Javakhetsy Grish, who were still under Nikol's command.

Pokhik's 14-member group arrived in Yerkir in May in an "unknown" way, i.e. from the south, via Sara. However, some Kurds who were high on the mountains noticed the detachment, which soon found itself in a trap. All the haydooks were killed: according to the Kurds, Pokhik and

Suren fought and were killed side by side, under the volunteers' fluttering flag. As the same Kurds confessed, the hayduks had struggled with Mausers and knives like people doomed to death until the very last of them was killed: nonetheless, the losses inflicted upon the Kurds were greater than theirs. Mentioning Suren's death with the utmost regret, Ruben writes in his memoirs that the former, an intelligent military figure and an unsurpassed teacher of military work coming from a country unknown to his Turkish Armenian friends, was highly appreciated by them: "We were not able to find out his real name. As far as I know, he was from Khanchali Village of Akhalkalak. His handsome face can never fade away from ... my memory. He should not have died such a death..."¹⁶⁶

The Meskhetian fidayis from Javakhk did not remain aloof from the Sasun revolt of 1904: one of them, Akhaltskha inhabitant Marto, who was held in high repute among the leaders of the insurgency, died a death of a hero together with his commander Hrayr on the road leading from Semal to Geliegouzan, at the fighting near Chay on April 13.¹⁶⁷ The suppression of this uprising finally made it clear that it was impossible to achieve the Western Armenians' liberation through hayduk fighting, so that it was necessary to give up that fashion of struggling, giving preference to the nationwide insurgency. For the realization of that difficult problem, it was primarily necessary to persuade the hayduk leaders to lay down arms and give up the idea of partisan struggle. It is interesting to note that 24-year-old Ruben Ter-Minassian, who had moved to Taron in compliance with a decision of the Dashnaktsutiun made in 1906, succeeded in breaking Gevorg Chaush's and Spaghantsy Makar's steadfast determination, persuading them to accept the new policy adopted by the party, viz. to switch from hayduk fighting to the organization of a nationwide mutiny.

After the fighting of Sulukh (between the Armenian fidayis and the Turks) and, especially, the coup d'etat perpetrated by the Young Turks, when the Turkish Constitution declared equal rights for all the nations in Turkey, as well as the abolition of national and religious persecution.

many fidayis stopped their struggle, either believing the Young Turks' promises or complying with the decisions made by their parties. Among many Eastern Armenians, the haydoos from Javakhk and Akhaltskha, including Usul Khecho, headed for their homes. This famous warrior was received with great rejoicing in his birthplace Akhaltskha.

The Problem of the Administrative-Territorial Dependency of Akhalkalak District

During the first Russian revolution of 1905 to 1907 and the period following it, the Armenian political circles and, especially, the Dashnaks suggested that the Russian authorities should implement an administrative-territorial re-division in Transcaucasia. The Armenian politicians rightly believed that the national circles' protest was due to the backwardness of the administrative-territorial system of Tsarist Russia. Among other reforms, the issue of the establishment of *zemstvos*, i.e. elective bodies of local self-government, was put forward. They were to be formed in accordance with the ethnic-national principle and were to be dependent upon one general Regional Zemstvo. This programme would enable the Transcaucasian districts with a large Armenian population, particularly, the territories beyond the borders of Yerevan Province, including Javakhk, to be involved in the bodies of local government. However, this project, which was submitted to the Caucasian Viceroy, was to share the fate of many other suggestions presented to the Transcaucasian governors during 1908 to 1909: it remained on paper and fell into oblivion for some time. It was only in 1913 that Viceroy Vorontsov-Dashkov's Cabinet again put the issue of *zemstvos* on the agenda: it was suggested that new provinces should be established, their formation being based on the principle of the homogeneity of the ethnic make-up of the territories. This meant that the project submitted by Dashnaktsutun had been taken into account as a result of long-lasting discussions. This was followed by the establishment of a special committee of specialists.

In accordance with the ethnographic principle, the following changes were suggested at the session of the Committee of the Re-division of Tiflis Province convened on January 24, 1914, and chaired by Governor Chernyavski: to unite Zakatala Okrug with Tiflis; the southern part (1,582 square versts) of Akhaltskha Province with Kars Marz; the whole of Akhalkalak District (2,407 square versts) and the greater part of Borchalu with Yerevan Province, and the northeastern parts of Borchalu and southern parts of Signakh District with Yelizavetpol Province. In this manner, Tiflis Province was to convert into a predominantly Georgian-populated administrative unit, while its territory was to be reduced by about 32 %, shrinking from 35,904 square versts to 24,201 square versts.¹⁶⁸

Putting under consideration the aforementioned suggestions by the Caucasian viceroy's Cabinet, the Provincial Administration of Tiflis developed a special project that was submitted to the district administrations and other interested bodies. The district administrations of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak, consisting predominantly of Georgians, displayed a negative attitude towards the project without any discussion, keeping it secret from the population. The District Committee of Akhaltskha opposed the suggestion that the territory of Ude's village community, mainly inhabited by Armenians and included in Koblian District lying in the south of the district, should join Kars Marz, their opposition resting upon the "principle" of the economic dependence of Akhaltskha's villages upon Tiflis. At the same time, such an administrative re-division was considered dangerous for the local Georgians and Armenians, and favourable for the Muslims.

Akhalkalak Committee rejected the project, too, again under the "plea" of the dependency of the district's economic and educational life upon Tiflis. Its conclusion "proved" that the population of Akhalkalak had absolutely no desire to establish any relations with Alexandropol, with which they had no economic ties. Another excuse was that, unlike the road to Tiflis, the motorway connecting the district with Alexandropol was always under the threat of closing during winter months. The point

was that besides Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak, all the Transcaucasian regions were economically linked with Tiflis, the greater part of Armenian students receiving their education there. This fact logically suggested that all the districts of the region should form part of only that province. As for the problem of the roads, it was not convincing: the motorway to Shirak might become difficult of passage in winter, but it was far safer since it extended through Javakhk and Ashotsk Plateaux, constituting the former's organic continuation. On the contrary, it was the road to Tiflis, stretching through the Parvana shore and an area more than 2,000 to 2,500 metres high, that closed in winter and became impassable. As for the other road leading to the provincial centre via Akhaltskha and Borzhom, it was first of all rather long, extending for about 300 kilometres, and, besides, rather a large part of it passed through a dangerous area, namely the deep gorges of the rivers Taparvan and Kur. When we add to these the same Committee's confession that "...the unification" of that district "with Yerevan Province was convenient for ... only part of the population, viz. the Armenians, although they constituted 72 % of the entire population,"¹⁶⁹ it becomes clear that the conclusion made by the Committee was not in the vital interests of the population of the given administrative unit and contradicted the spirit of the suggested reforms, insisting on the ethnic principle as the basis of the administrative-territorial division.

The Georgian officials made similar decisions with regard to Borchalu District as well. It is interesting to note that on the one hand, the principal conclusion of the Special Provincial Conference found it unacceptable to segregate all the aforementioned, mostly Armenian-populated, districts, giving preference to the economic principle rather than the ethnographic one; on the other hand, the joining of Zakatala Okrug, populated by only a small number of Georgians, with Tiflis Province was considered "quite natural and possible."¹⁷⁰ It is evident that under any circumstances, the Georgian political circles worked with the same scenario, guided by the consideration of their own interests. On March 15, 1914, a special package of the approaches put forward at the conference

held in Tiflis was submitted to the Caucasian viceroy's Cabinet, which left these standpoints on paper until the middle of 1917. Thus, the first stage of the administrative reforms in both Transcaucasia and Tiflis Province was over.

In the years of the Balkan War (1912 to 1913) and World War I, the liberation struggle against Turkish tyranny entered upon a new phase. In late October 1912, the Armenian political circles held a meeting attended by the representatives of the Eastern Armenian intellectuals, including several figures from Akhaltskha. The assembly decided that all the Armenian-inhabited districts should have bodies which were to contribute to the reopening of the Armenian Question.¹⁷¹ Similar bodies were also set up in Akhaltskha, where tangible work was carried out for the purpose of addressing petitions to the Armenian Catholicos, empires, and the whole world, thus imparting international publicity to the Armenian Question. A number of outstanding personalities of the Armenian liberation struggle participated in the Balkan War.

In the summer months of 1914, i.e. in the last stage of the Russian Empire's preparations to be involved in the World War, Akhalkalak District entered upon a general military turmoil, for one of the most important military units of the Caucasian army had been stationed there. Together with several other Transcaucasian cities, Akhalkalak had been considerably fortified on the eve of the war so that in case of the enemy's unexpected offensive, it could temporarily prevent their advance until a general Russian counterattack.¹⁷²

Beginning with August and September, new army units started arriving from different Russian provinces: some of them were stationed in the military town of Akhalkalak as well as in Kartzakh and other villages; the others moved to Kars Marz.

The same period also marked the commencement of both general mobilization and the recruiting of Armenian volunteers: for this purpose, the district's Dashnak organization, whose activity had been banned prior to those events, was granted permission to work freely. By the order of the District Head, patriotic lectures were delivered at schools and in pub-

lic places; articles were published in the Armenian press received from Tiflis, their authors always reminding the generations of Akhalkalak immigrants about the vital necessity of "liberating" their former motherland, Erzurum, as well as the imperative of committing themselves to the Armeno-Russian military alliance and the cause of their homeland's salvation. This propaganda particularly involved those participants of the Western Armenian struggle for freedom who were from Javakhk, most of them voluntarily recruiting into the nascent Armenian regiments. Usul Khecho and Hajji Levon, who were held in high repute, resumed their activity: the former took up different responsible posts in Hamazasp's and Keri's regiments, distinguishing himself as the company commander's assistant in the 2nd company of the 4th regiment at the severe battles fought on the south-western shore of Lake Van in June 1915. For some time, Hajji Levon and Ashik held command of one of the cavalry detachments of the Araratian Regiment.¹⁷³ Twenty-year-old Aghasi Korkotian from Akhaltskha interrupted his studies in the last form of the municipal school and joined the volunteers together with his friends.¹⁷⁴

In the first days of the war, the Caucasian troops of the Russian army suffered temporary fiascos, as a result of which the Turks invaded the western districts of Kars Marz, subjecting the local Armenians to massacres. The general panic compelled the population to immigrate into Eastern Armenia and other Transcaucasian territories. In November some Armenians from Kars arrived in Akhalkalak via Ardahan District, and busy work began to accommodate them in Javakhk villages and provide them with food.

Supplying their troops with fresh forces from Erzurum and the western regions of the empire, the Turkish army leaders attempted to fight their way to Tiflis via Ardahan and Akhalkalak.¹⁷⁵ Fortunately, their plans suffered complete frustration: at the victorious battle of Sarighamish (December 1914 to January 1915), the 3rd Turkish army was crushed and forced to withdraw to Erzurum. The spring of 1915 found most of the emigrants of Kars who had found refuge in Akhalkalak back in their homes.

Despite the fact that Akhalkalak was quite a long way from the front line, the military situation and, moreover, the 1915 Genocide of the Armenians left their most immediate imprint upon the life of the district. The local population had to deliver food for the army to the front or at least Kars City on their own horses and carriages. A considerable part of these supplies was assembled in the form of taxes exacted from the locals: the peasants had to give corn, meat, and dairy products as well as warm winter clothes, etc. for the front. In August 1915, the first Western Armenian refugees who had had a narrow escape from the Genocide reached Akhalkalak District, most of them being famine-stricken and half-naked women and children. The Armenian Charity Society of Tiflis and the local non-governmental organizations carried out some work to accommodate them in the city and villages, and supply clothes and food for them. Through the efforts of Vardan Shahparonian, the publisher of the "Javakhk" weekly, an orphanage opened in Akhalkalak, and a great number of parentless deportees found shelter there. This prominent intellectual committed himself to the difficult work of caring for and bringing up these children.¹⁷⁶

In 1915 to 1916, when a considerable part of Western Armenia had been conquered by the Russian troops, some of the Western Armenian refugees who had found haven in Javakhk returned to their native villages. A group of Akhalkalak inhabitants who had moved to Erzurum, led by Poghos Abelian, joined the National Charity Society called *Union of Cities*, making a tangible contribution to the administering of relief to the Western Armenian deportees.¹⁷⁷

The revolution of February 1917 changed the political situation in Transcaucasia drastically: along with the developing democratic processes, political chaos permeated through the extremities of the large Russian Empire. For a long time, OZAKOM (Special Transcaucasian Committee), the body of the Provisional Government in Transcaucasia, failed to establish its dependent bodies for the different nationalities of the region. Head of Akhalkalak District Kalinin, who had concealed the news of the collapse of tsarism from the peo-

ple, continued ruling the district in the former fashion for some time. Referring to the situation in the district in those days, Nerses Ter-Grigorian wrote, "A Council of Soldiers and Peasantry without soldiers and peasantry. An unspeakable excitement had spread to the villages... every day the people were in grave suspense: ... how the land issue was to be settled, ... the question of the termination of the war, the problem of the return of thousands of people who were the only breadwinners in their homes, etc."¹⁷⁸

In the spring of 1917, outstanding poet and prominent public figure Vahan Terian came to his native district on a several months' visit. During that period, he unfolded active work: thanks to his speeches, the District Court of Akhalkalak made a decision to restitute the lands in Poka Village, illegally given to the Dukhobors by the Tsarist Government, to their proper owners.¹⁷⁹ On a few occasions, Terian made revolutionary speeches for the soldiers in Akhalkalak's newly-built school and at the club of the military town. The incipient persecutions, however, compelled him to leave the district.

The year 1917 marked an unexpectedly rich harvest and serious economic bloom in the history of Akhalkalak District. The drastic increase in the agricultural products made it possible to supply food for many Transcaucasian regions and store a large amount of corn and forage.¹⁸⁰

The year 1917 marked not only economic upsurge but also serious political developments: the socio-political circles all over Transcaucasia and Akhalkalak began enthusiastic discussions over the structure of the future state, the new administrative-territorial division of the region, war and peace, the convening of the Constitutional Assembly, as well as other vital issues.

Thus, from 1828 to 1917, Akhalkalak District was gradually involved in the general administrative-political and economic system of the Russian Empire, experiencing serious socio-economic and cultural progress. With no danger of external hazards and physical extermination, the demographic development of the region assumed an orientation favourable for the Armenians.

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- 1 Collected Acts of the Caucasian Archaeological Commission, vol. 3, p. 580.
- 2 *Idem*, p. 583.
- 3 According to the same Russian military sources, the fatalities the Persians suffered amounted to 1,100, 800 of whom were killed during the storm in the camp, and 300 in the Taparvan Gorge at the moment of escape (*idem*, vol. 4, p. 768).
- 4 *Idem*, vol. 4, p. 813.
- 5 ЦГВИА, ф. ВУА, д. 2875, ч. 3, лл. 173.-174 (State Central Military Historical Archives, Military Training Archives, file 2875, part 3, pp.173.-174).
- 6 Collected Acts of the Caucasian Archaeological Commission, vol. 5, p. 186.
- 7 **Potto, V.** The Caucasian War..., vol. 1, part 3, Tiflis, 1885, p. 564.
- 8 The fact that the Western Armenian resettlers chose to take up living in Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak was by no means accidental. These districts were under the charge of Erzurum Diocese and Karapet Bagratuny, the leader of that diocese, was well-aware of their natural, climatic and geographic conditions. In this respect, Javakhk resembled the districts of Erzurum Province to a great extent; moreover, the attitude of the Russian authorities was also of certain importance since they wanted the occupied lands to be populated by Christian Armenians.
- 9 Baralet, mentioned by historian Vakhushhti, is the only village in Javakhk where the Eastern Armenian language has been preserved. Unlike other local villages, it did not become a new place of living for the Armenians of Erzurum, which enabled it to preserve its vernacular and customs. This comes to suggest that we can form a certain idea about the native Armenians of Javakhk through the people of this village.
- 10 Matenadaran: Archives of Archbishop Karapet, folder 163q, document 1216, p.1; folder 163t, document 134, pp. 1-3.
- 11 See **Ghafadarian, K.** Materials on the History of the Armenian Community of Akhaltskha, p. 123.
- 12 Սատենադարան, Հ. Արքայապետի արխ., քրթ. '99, վ. 41, ք. 1-2 (Matenadaran: Archives of H. Abrahamian, folder 99, document 41, pp. 1-2).
- 13 **Potto, V.** The Caucasian War..., vol. 4, part 1, p. 103.
- 14 **Jamalian, A.** The Armeno-Georgian Problem. In: "Hayrenik." April 28, 1928, p. 85.
- 15 See **Մելկոնյան Ա., Էրզրում (Melkonyan, A. Erzurum)**, pp. 43-102, 160-165, for the villages of Erzurum Province (whence the Western Armenians came) that are mentioned in the table.
- 16 According to A. Davtian, the inhabitants of Balkho came from Meghri Village of Erzurum District (Davtian, *idem*, p. 70), but such a village did not ever exist there: probably, the author implies Meghragom Village of Tortum District.

- 17 In Baralet P. Mouradian studied some inscriptions engraved on several tombstones: they indicate that this village was also populated by people from Alashker. **Մուրադյան Պ. Մ.**, Հայաստանի վրացերեն արձանագրությունները, հ. 1, Ե. (**Muradian, P. M.** The Georgian Epigraphy of Armenia, vol. 1, Yerevan), 1977, p. 151.
- 18 A. Davtian writes that the inhabitants of Bezhanó resettled from Tovaz and Chavush Villages of Erzurum District (**Davtian, idem**, p. 78), but such villages did not exist there. We are convinced that the author means a single village known by the name of Topal-Chavush.
- 19 The location of the native village of the Chamdura people's forefathers, i.e. Gilli-Killi-Kyulli, is still to be verified: it is uncertain whether it is to be identified to Kyulli Village of the sub-district of Tekman; Khnus, situated in the area of the upper course of the river Arax. or Killi Village of Verin Basen located to the east of Erzurum City, near the source of the Murtsajur. We are of the opinion that it is more likely to be equated with Killi, since the Kyulli inhabitants from Khnus who mainly settled down in Heshtia Village of Javakhk, speak the Mush dialect and are Catholics in contrast to the Killi people, who are adherents of the Orthodox faith, with their dialect included in the Karin branch, like that of the present-day Chamdura people.
- 20 It is remarkable that the inhabitants of this village have retained surnames deriving from the names of their former settlements: Saladzortsian, Gomktsian, Ghushchian, Puchikian, etc.
- 21 A. Davtian attributes the resettlement of Metz Samsar to a period later than the 1830s (**Davtian, A.** The Armenian and Predominantly Armenian-Populated Settlements of Georgia, p. 146), but he is evidently mistaken.
- 22 A. Davtian mentions Kyoshk as 'Kochkak' (**Davtian, A.**, idem, p. 220).
- 23 The District of Bogdanovka. A Reference-Book, p. 27.
- 24 **Davtian, A.**, idem, p. 161.
- 25 **Davtian, A.**, idem. pp. 42, 198.
- 26 Baralet, mentioned by historian Vakhushti, is the only village in Javakhk where the Eastern Armenian language has been preserved: unlike the other local settlements, it did not become a new place of living for the Armenians of Erzurum, which enabled it to preserve its vernacular and customs.
- 27 Matenadaran: Archives of Archbishop Karapet, folder 163q, document 1216, p. 1; document 1223, p. 1; folder 163r, document 1331, pp. 1-3; document 1403, p. 1; folder 163t, document 78, p. 1. ЦГИАГ, ф. 11, д. 418, док. 713, ф. 2, оп. 1, дд. 3396, 4587, 4619 (State Central Historical Archives of Georgia, fund 11, file 418. document 713; fund 2, list 1, files 3396, 4587, 4619). Collected Acts of the Caucasian Archaeological Commission, vol. 8, p. 884.
- 28 State Military Historical Archives of Russia, fund 450, list 1, files 276, 403: A Statistical Description of Transcaucasia. pp. 174,179; **Zubov, P.** A Picture of the

- Caucasian Region..., pp. 283-284; A Review of the Russian Dominions in Transcaucasia..., part 4, p. 202.
- 29 On August 16, 1828, Vasil Behbutov was appointed First President of the Provisional Department of Akhaltskha Province. In July 1829, he was substituted for by Baron Osten-Saken, who held office for a month being succeeded by Lieutenant Colonel Drashern from July 1829 till March 1831. Until 1840 that position was alternately occupied by another 8 officials whose surnames can be seen in the chronological order of their terms in: Lomsadze, Sh. Samtskhe-Javakheti, pp. 253-254.
 - 30 Загурский Л., Поездка в ахалцихский уезд в 1872 г., (ЗКОРИГО), кн. 8 (Zagursky, L. A Trip to Akhaltskha District in 1872, book 8), p. 68.
 - 31 A Picture of the Caucasian Region..., pp. 297-298.
 - 32 A Statistical Description of Transcaucasia, p. 185.
 - 33 A Review of the Russian Dominions in Transcaucasia..., part 4, p. 219.
 - 34 A Picture of the Caucasian Region..., pp. 298-299.
 - 35 A Statistical Description of Transcaucasia, p. 188.
 - 36 Collected Acts of the Caucasian Archaeological Commission, vol. 6, p. 850.
 - 37 A Picture of the Caucasian Region..., pp. 299-304.
 - 38 A Statistical Description of Transcaucasia, p. 179.
 - 39 A Review of the Russian Dominions in Transcaucasia..., part 4, p. 226.
 - 40 Idem, pp. 230-232.
 - 41 Lalayan, Yer. Works, vol. 1, pp. 57-58.
 - 42 See Евангулов Г. Г., Местная реформа на Кавказе, СПб Yevangulov, G. G. The Local Reforms in Caucasia. St. Petersburg), 1914, p. 11 about Gan's committee and its projects of administrative reforms.
 - 43 In 1843 the population of entire Transcaucasia amounted to 1,483,000, 979,000 of whom lived in the Georgian-Imeretian Province (Collected Acts of the Caucasian Archaeological Commission, vol. 9, Tiflis, 1884, p. 605).
 - 44 Кавказский календарь на 1846 г., Т. (Caucasian Calendar for 1846. Tiflis), 1845, p. 169.
 - 45 Ibid.
 - 46 Sargis Hazarapetian's son Isaac also occupied important positions between the '70s and '80s of the 19th century and became Assistant District Head of Akhalkalak.
 - 47 РГИА СПб., ф. 1268, оп. 1, д. 974а, л. 5 (State Historical Archives of Russia (St. Petersburg), fund 1268, list 1, file 974a, p. 5).
 - 48 The Turkish troops that invaded Akhaltskha District in the autumn of 1853 even succeeded in reaching the suburbs of Akhaltskha. The defenders of the city were encouraged by Archbishop Karapet and soon the Turks suffered a total defeat near Sukhlis

- Village. Գեղամյանց Հ., Կարապետ արքեպիսկոպոս (Կենսագրություն), (Geghamiants, H. Archbishop Karapet. A Biography), pp. 85-87. On November 3, 1853, a small detachment led by Lieutenant Colonel Tsimmermann prevented the Turkish intruders' advance into the depths of the sub-district of Akhalkalak. On June 23, 1855, the Akhalkalak detachment led by General Orbeliany crushed the 1,500-soldier enemy cavalry near Sulda (Caucasian Calendar for 1862, Tiflis 1861, pp. 232, 237).
- 49 State Central Historical Archives of Georgia, fund 7, list 11, file 1, pp. 109-112.
- 50 See Dictionary of Toponymy of Armenia and Adjacent Territories, vol. 1, p. 110 for the map of Akhalkalak District. This dictionary mentions 1860 as the year of the establishment of Akhalkalak District (idem, p. 109).
- 51 Matenadaran: Archives of Archbishop Karapet, folder 163q, document 1181, p. 1.
- 52 Idem, folder 163q, document 1218, p. 1; document 1250, pp. 1-2.
- 53 Davtian, A. The Armenian and Predominantly Armenian-Populated Settlements of Georgia, p. 161.
- 54 Matenadaran: Archives of Archbishop Karapet, folder 163, document 1206, p. 1.
- 55 Idem, folder 163q, document 1230, p. 1; folder 163η, document 1331, pp. 1-6; document 1344, p. 1; document 1403, p. 1; document 1415, pp. 1-3.
- 56 Idem, folder 163ե, document 66, p. 1; document 77, p. 1; document 79, pp. 1-2; document 90, p. 1, document 102, pp. 1-3; document 119, pp. 1-3.
- 57 Matenadaran: Archives of Archbishop Karapet, folder 163ե, document 78, pp. 1-2. Although the number of those returning to Western Armenia was noticeable, the Turkish authorities' expectations to restore the abandoned settlements on their account did not come true. Eager to realize this at any cost, in 1835 the sultan issued a special firman to encourage the Muslim inhabitants of the Russian territories to immigrate into Turkey: he also offered state assistance to all those willing to accept it (idem, folder 163η, document 1476, p. 1).
- 58 ՀՀ ԳԱԱ ՊԻ Լեռնի անձն. թիվ 1 ֆոնդ, list 1, q. 28, p. 1-1ա (History Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of the RA. Personal Archives of Leo, fund 1, list 1, file 28, pp. 1-1ա).
- 59 Раде Г., Поездка в Ахалцихский уезд в 1872 г., (ЗКОРИГО), книга 8, Т. (Radde, G. A Trip to Akhaltskha District in 1872. In: Transactions of the Caucasian Branch of the Russian Imperial Geographical Society, book 8, Tiflis), 1873, p. 8.
- 60 There exist a vast number of materials on the agriculture, land relations, forms of land ownership and taxes in Akhalkalak District; that is why, we have not dwelt upon such issues in order not to burden the present work with them. For details see National Archives of Armenia, fund 53, list 1, file 2418, pp. 35-38; file 2961, pp. 154-155 as well as the works by Vermishev, Ch. A., Kuchayev, M. N., Bakhtadze, I. L., Parvitsky, A. V., Medvedyev, Y. S., Andronikov, I. Z., Markov, Ph. T., Gopadze, I. V., Ivanov, V., Mikeladze, A., Asmarov (Asmarian), Kh., Grigorov (Grigorian), K. and others.

- 61 Personal Archives of Leo, list 1, file 27, p. 1.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 Matenadaran; Archives of Archbishop Karapet, folder 163q, document 1187, pp. 1-3.
- 64 Personal Archives of Leo, list 1, file 27, p. 2.
- 65 Matenadaran: Archives of Archbishop Karapet, folder 163q, document 264, pp. 1-3.
- 66 Idem, folder 163q, document 1231, p. 1.
- 67 Idem, folder 163q, document 1480, pp. 1-8. Later the members of the group also immigrated into Akhaltskha and the duty of returning the refugees from Karin was entrusted upon the local Russian consul (idem, folder 163q, document 1507, pp. 1-2; folder 163k, document 136, p. 1; document 161, pp. 1-2). In the early 1830s, on Archbishop Karapet's order, another committee worked in Erzurum under the supervision of teacher Gregory Shekerjian. The latter was to carry out propaganda in favour of immigration into Transcaucasia. A lot of village priests included in the committee moved to Akhaltskha and the adjacent villages after 1834 to 1835 (idem, folder 163q, document 1424, p. 1), but the available archive documents testify that individual cases of immigration into the Russian territories continued until the late 1840s (idem, folder 129, document 68, p. 1).
- 68 Idem, folder 163q, document 1227, pp. 1-2; document 1262, p. 1; folder 163q, document 1292, p. 1.
- 69 Idem, folder 163q, document 1310, pp. 1-2.
- 70 Idem, folder 163q, document 1509, p. 1; document 1528, p. 15.
- 71 Idem. Կաթողիկոսական դիվան, թիվ. 90, վավ. 56 (Matenadaran: Patriarchal Fund, folder 90, document 56), pp. 1-2.
- 72 A Statistical Description of Transcaucasia, p. 181.
- 73 Մատենադարան, Հարություն Աբրահամյանի արխիվ, թիվ. 99, վավ. 41 (Matenadaran: Archives of Harutian Abrahamian, folder 99, document 41).
- 74 See the statistical data for 1838 in: ՀՀ ՊԿՊԱ, ֆ. 53, list 1, file 1361, p. 6-12; 1840 - file 3800, p. 4-4ա; 1842 - file 3805, p. 76ա-79; 1844 - file 3809, p. 13-19; 1847 - file 3814, p. 32-36; 1850 - file 3820, p. 51ա-55 (National Archives of Armenia, fund 53, list 1, file 1361, pp. 6-12; 1840 - file 3800, pp. 4-4ա; 1842 - file 3805, pp. 76ա-79; 1844 - file 3809, pp. 13-19; 1847 - file 3814, pp. 32-36; 1850 - file 3820, pp. 51ա-55). The lists presenting the number of the population had certain errors, which we have corrected. The lists have omitted both the Catholic villages and a number of Apostolic ones. The lack of any data on the village is marked by the sign (-). Cf. the tables on the displacements of Javakhs population both between the 1830s and '70s and in the following years in: **Karapetian, G. H.** Javakhs between 1830 and 1930, pp. 97-114.

- 75 **Davtian, A.** The Armenian and Predominantly Armenian-Populated Settlements of Georgia, p. 88. The table above clearly reflects the displacement of Chiftlik people into Buzavet. Until 1844 the population constantly increased in Chiftlik amounting to 312. Then it drastically shrank, constituting 240 souls in 1847. In the same year (1847), Buzavet, that had been completely abandoned by that time, had 88 inhabitants.
- 76 *Ibid.* National Archives of Armenia, fund 53, list 1, file 3809, pp. 16-17; file 3814, p. 34u.
- 77 **Davtian, A.** The Armenian and Predominantly Armenian-Populated Settlements of Georgia, pp. 124, 202. See National Archives of Armenia, fund 53, list 1, file 3814, pp. 33-34; file 3820, p. 53, for the abandonment of Ekhtila and the population increase in Drkna and Lomaturtskh.
- 78 A. Davtian considers 1854 to '55 as the period of the resettlement of the emigrants from Dinarigom Village of Erzurum District in Pokr Khanchali. Evidently, however, he is mistaken since the aforementioned list of villages mentions it as already populated with 42 people in 1850. The list does not make any reference to Pokr Khanchali in 1847: therefore, the village must have been re-populated between 1848 and 1849.
- 79 The majority of those people emigrated from Dzitogh and Kyoshk Villages of Erzurum District in 1830.
- 80 *Caucasian Calendar for 1852*, Tiflis, 1851, pp. 292, 295, cf. *Кавквз, Тифлис*, 1851, No. 56.
- 81 **Lomsadze, Sh.** *Samtskhe-Javakheti*, pp. 476-477.
- 82 *Caucasian Calendar for 1851*, Tiflis, 1850, p. 103.
- 83 See the statistical data in: National Archives of Armenia, fund 53, list 1, file 3828, pp. 58-61 for 1856; file 3850, pp. 137-140 for 1858; file 3833, pp. 65-68 for 1860, file 3848, pp. 11-14 for 1865; file 3856, pp. 19-20 for 1869; file 3850, pp. 217-220 for 1878; file 3859, pp. 56-59 for 1872.
- 84 For some reason or another, the document lacks data on the population number of Akhalkalak City for 1858. Comparing the information for 1856 (1,670 inhabitants) and 1860 (2,045 inhabitants) and taking into account the average natural growth, we can estimate its population at 1,800. We have included this figure in the total of the population of the city.
- 85 The figure 20,112 includes 1,800 (according to our rough estimate) dwellers of Akhalkalak City omitted from the list.
- 86 **Isoyan, A.** *Satkhā, Metz Aragyāl, Pokr Aragyāl*, pp. 494-502.
- 87 **Davtian, A.** The Armenian and Predominantly Armenian-Populated Settlements of Georgia, pp. 172, 177-178, 183, 218, 229.
- 88 **Zagursky, L.** *A Trip to Akhaltskha District in 1872*, book 8, p. 63.
- 89 Personal Archives of Leo, fund I, list 1, file 54, p. 2.

- 90 National Archives of Armenia, fund 53, list 1, file 3931, pp. 4-17; file 4077, pp. 19-41.
- 91 Ibid., file 3805, pp. 76-77.
- 92 Matenadaran: Patriarchal Fund, folder 90, document 69, pp. 1-2.
- 93 State Historical Archives of Russia. fund 1263, list 1, file 1192, pp. 628-630.
- 94 National Archives of Armenia. fund 56, list 1, file 3245, pp. 1-4.
- 95 Ibid. A sazhen is equal to 2.134 metres: consequently, the church was 27.3 metres long, 16.8 metres wide and 6.3 metres high.
- 96 National Archives of Armenia, fund 53, list 1, file 3800, pp. 4-4u, file 3820, pp. 51-68, 127-141, 198-203, file 3839, pp. 26-31, Արձագանք, 1885, 31 դեկտեմբեր ("Arzagank," December 31, 1885, in Armenian), pp. 367-368. Cf. Davtian, A. The Armenian and Predominantly Armenian-Populated Settlements of Georgia, pp. 37-40. The dates of the foundation of the churches are only approximate. Cf. the data in table 4 in: Karapetian, G. H. Javakhk between 1830 and 1930, pp. 104-106.
- 97 Collected Acts of the Caucasian Archaeological Commission. vol. 9, pp. 113, 117.
- 98 Zagursky, L. A Trip to Akhalksxa District in 1872, book 8, p. 68.
- 99 Matenadaran: Patriarchal Fund, folder 86, document 269, p. 1.
- 100 Khachatrian, Zh. K. Armenian Folk Dances of Javakhk, pp. 4-6.
- 101 See National Archives of Armenia, fund 53, list 1, file 3931, pp. 8-78, for information about the first schools founded in Akhalkalak and Akhalksxa and the number of their pupils.
- 102 National Archives of Armenia, fund 53, list 1, file 396, pp. 10-11.
- 103 Ibid., p. 29.
- 104 Caucasian Calendar for 1874, Tiflis, 1873, pp. 111-112.
- 105 National Archives of Armenia, fund 53, list 1, file 3998, pp. 9-10.
- 106 Ibid., file 3993, pp. 163-163u.
- 107 Matenadaran: Patriarchal Fund, folder 91, document 150, pp. 1-6.
- 108 Caucasian Calendar for 1882, Tiflis, 1881, p. 312. In all the 6 cities of Tiflis Province together (except for Tiflis), the Armenians constituted 79 % of the population (idem, pp. 314-315).
- 109 By 1913 the district territory had enlarged a little, amounting to 2,407 versts (Caucasian Calendar for 1913, Tiflis, 1912, p. 212).
- 110 Caucasian Calendar for 1891, Tiflis, 1890, pp. 2-3. The 10 village communities of the 10 villages of Akhalkalak District represented the following picture as per their centers and number of villages: Aragova (13 villages), Baralet (23), Varevan (9), Vachian (11), Gorelovka (8), Diliska (9), Kartzakh (10), Satkha (8), Khertvis (11), Heshtia (8).
- 111 See Akhalkalak District of Tiflis Province, pp. 18-19 for the data of 1886; Lalayan, Yer. Works, vol. 1, p. 96 for 1894; Caucasian Calendar for 1907, Tiflis, 1906, pp.

- 129-130 for the data of the population census of 1897, Caucasian Calendar for 1915, Tiflis, 1914, pp. 242-243 for 1914.
- 112 Out of the 4,962 Muslims, 4,372 were Turks and 590 Kurds.
- 113 The 910 representatives of other nationalities included 810 Kurds, 53 Poles, 17 Lithuanians or Letts, 17 Germans, 9 Lezghins and Chechens, 3 Persians and 1 Ossetin.
- 114 The 6,905 Muslims include 135 Muslim "Georgians."
- 115 Lynch, H. F. B. Armenia. Travels and Studies, Vol. 1, New York, 1990, p. 86.
- 116 Caucasian Calendar for 1886, Tiflis, 1885, p. 118.
- 117 Caucasian Calendar for 1891, Tiflis, 1890, pp. 2-3.
- 118 Vermishev, Kh. A., idem, pp. 22-23.
- 119 Ճանապարհորդական յիշատակարան, Արձագանք, 1885, 21 հուլիս (Travelling Notes. In: "Ardzagank," July 21, 1885), pp. 42-43:
- 120 Շիրինյան Ս. Խ., Ախալքալաքցիներ, Ե. (Shirinian, S. Kh. Inhabitants of Akhalkalak. Yerevan), 2000, pp. 107-108, Նազարյան Ս., «Ջավախք» շաբաթաթերթը, ԲԵՀ (Nazarian, S. The Javakhk Weekly. In: "Banber Yerevani Hamalsrani") 1992, No. 1, p. 201. The new building of the school built by Vardan Shahparonian, that has been standing up today, housed the local Armenian school in the first years of the Soviet rule. Now part of it belongs to the Russian school, the other to the Regional Cultural Centre.
- 121 See Table 5 for the sources referred to. The number of the Armenians also includes about 30 families of Armenian gypsies called 'boshas': they lived in the north of the city (see Վանցյան Գ., Պատմական ակնարկ բոշաների անցյալից, Սուրճ (Vantsian, G. A Historical Survey on the Past of the Boshas. In: "Murj"), 1894, Nos. 7-8, p. 1074).
- 122 We tend to think that the 703 Russian inhabitants fixed in 1897 also included the family members of the officers' staff of the military town.
- 123 The data for 1914 miss the number of the Greeks and Jews and represent that of the other nationalities only partially: therefore, we have no complete data about the entire population of the city.
- 124 The 262 Orthodox Georgians also include 35 Muslim "Georgians."
- 125 Caucasian Calendar for 1887, Tiflis, 1886, p. 186.
- 126 See National Archives of Armenia, fund 35, list 1, file 103, p. 68 for more details about the damage caused by the earthquake of 1899. The document whose authenticity was confirmed by the District Head himself is fully included in the Appendix of the Armenian original of the present work.
- 127 Կոստանդյան Է. Ա., Սկրտիչ Խրիմյան. Հասարակական-քաղաքական գործունեությունը, Ե. (Kostandian, E. The Socio-Political Activity of Mkrtich Khrimian, Yerevan). 2000, p. 401:

- 128 **Lalayan, Yer.** Works, vol. 1, p. 87. See *idem*, pp. 85-87 for information about the inhabitants of Vel. Georgian historian Sh. Lomsadze expresses regret that the measures taken to “re-convert” Vel inhabitants to the Georgian religion and nationality suffered a complete fiasco (**Lomsadze, Sh.** Samtskhe-Javakheti, p. 365). The Georgian historian, however, does not explain the reason for the failure of that “step,” i.e. the fact that those people were true Armenians. Simple as the issue is, the Georgian politicians and scientific circles still trumpet this senseless and dangerous topic, poisoning the relations between the Armenian and Georgian peoples.
- 129 **Մեսրոպ արեղայ,** Ախալքալաք, Արաքս, Ս. Պետերբուրգ, 1903, մայիս (Akhalkalak by **Monk Mesrop.** In: “Arax,” May 1903. St. Petersburg), pp. 434-440:
- 130 See National Archives of Armenia, fund 53, list 1, file 3893, pp. 160-171 for the name list of the district clergy in the late 19th century.
- 131 **Kostandian, E.,** *idem.* p. 377. R. Ter-Minassian’s memoirs reveal that that large family was the Ohanjanians’ (Hovhanjanian) family, whose spacious mansion was known as the best hotel in Akhalkalak. **Ռուբեն,** Հայ յեղափոխականի մը յիշատակները, հ. 2 (**Ruben.** The Memoirs of an Armenian Revolutionary, vol. 6), p. 329.
- 132 **Kostandian, E.,** *idem.*
- 133 National Archives of Armenia, fund 53, list 1, file 3999, pp. 9-11, cf. **Lalayan, Yer.** Works, vol. 1, p. 127. The winter schools which functioned for 5 to 6 months provided their pupils with only elementary knowledge. As a rule, some of the teachers were the local priests who worked without any payment.
- 134 *Idem*, file 3993, pp. 128-129.
- 135 *Idem*, file 4002, pp. 54-62.
- 136 See «Վահան Տերյանը ժամանակակիցների հուշերում», Ե (Vahan Terian in the Memoirs of His Contemporaries. Yerevan), 1964, pp. 12-13, 117-118, 184, for the period of Vahan Terian’s studies in Akhalkalak.
- 137 Երեսնամեակ հայոց բարեգործական ընկերության Կովկասում. 1881-1911, կազմեց Լեօ, Թ. (The Thirtieth Anniversary of the Armenian Charity of Caucasus 1881 to 1911. Compiled by Leo. Tiflis), 1911, p. 196:
- 138 See **Khachatryan, Zh. K.** Armenian Folk Dances of Javakhk.
- 139 See **Քեշիշեան Զ.,** Ջառախի աշուղները, Հայրենի Ջառախք, ժողովածու (**Keshishian, Z.** The Minstrels of Javakhk. In: Our Native Javakhk), pp. 193-198.
- 140 See «Թումանյանը ժամանակակիցների հուշերում», Ե. (Tumanian in the Memoirs of His Contemporaries. Yerevan) 1969, pp. 377, 401-404, 417-436, for Tumanian’s visits to Javakhk.
- 141 Սշակ (“Mshak”), 1880, Nos. 10, 26, 31, 35, 59, etc.
- 142 Ախալքալաքի գավառագիտական թանգարան, գործ 3674, ք. 1-10 (Akhalkalak’s Museum of Regional History, file 3674, pp. 1-10): The contemporary press, especially, the “Mshak,” “Taraz,” etc., greatly contributed to the revival of the social and political

- life in Akhalkalak (see "Mshak," 1875, No. 5, 1880; No. 25: "Taraz," 1901, No. 19):
- 143 **Խուդինյան Գ.**, Հայ յեղափոխական դաշնակցութեան ծնունդը, Ե. (**Khudinian, G.** The Birth of Hay Heghapokhakan Dashnaktsujtun. Yerevan), 2000, p. 116:
- 144 *Idem*, pp. 116-117.
- 145 Akhalkalak's Museum of Regional History, file 3674, pp. 9-10. Later Satenik was engaged in charity activity in Constantinople and Cilicia. In the days of World War I, she visited Western Armenia for the purpose of administering relief to the refugees, but the latter infected her and she fell victim to the epidemic. For Satenik's activity, see **Զեյթլյան Մ.**, Հայ կնոջ դերը հայ յեղափոխական շարժման մէջ, Լոս Անճըլլիս (**Zeytlian, S.** The Role of the Armenian Woman in the Armenian Revolutionary Movement. Los Angeles), 1992, pp. 145-149.
- 146 **Վարանդեան Մ.**, Հ. Յ. Դաշնակցութեան պատմութիւն, Ե. (**Varandian, M.** History of Hay Heghapokhakan Dashnaktsutun. Yerevan), 1992, p. 364:
- 147 *Idem*, p. 69.
- 148 *Idem*, p. 120.
- 149 **Դավթյան Ա. Խ.**, Ջավախք (**Davtian, A. Kh.** Javakhk), p. 42:
- 150 **Ruben**, *idem*, vol. 6, p. 333.
- 151 As Ruben himself confesses, he was so carried away with the stories about the haydooks the adults always told him that he involuntarily considered Ghachagh Nabi and Ale's gangs, wandering in the vicinity of Tzalka and Mount Abul in those years, as national heroes. He strove to immitate them and become a haydook (**Ruben**, *idem*, vol. 1, p. 110).
- 152 The song was entitled "I am going to Armenia with a quarter of powder and a pistol in my pocket." Javakhk Armenians sang, "The Grasshopper is going ahead of everybody, his trouser button lost... and the pistol in his pocket. You, infidel Turks, run away quickly unless he takes it out and kills all of you!" (**Ruben**, *idem*, vol. 6, p. 330).
- 153 **Ruben**, *idem*, vol. 1, p. 20.
- 154 **Varandian, M.**, *idem*, p. 156.
- 155 **Ruben**, *idem*, vol. 1, p. 136.
- 156 Soon Ruben became one of the most influential Dashnak figures in Vaspurakan and Mush-Sasun. He was always busy either strengthening the local party-affiliated bodies or founding new ones. He joined many prominent fidayi leaders in a number of haydook fightings, including the battle of Sulukh (May 27, 1907), during which Gevorg Chaush was killed.
- 157 **Ruben**, *idem*, vol. 1, p. 147.
- 158 **Ruben**, *idem*, vol. 1, pp. 172-173.
- 159 According to Ruben, Nikol, who had had a glorious past in the struggle for freedom, lived a cruel life and died completely helpless. Usul Khecho, who was also known as

Usul Khacho ('usul' means 'peaceful' in Karin dialect; presumably, he was so called for the tranquility and cool-headedness he manifested at the hardest moments), was predestined to become a true legend. During his quite long-lasting participation in the haydook movement, the Turkish authorities imprisoned and condemned him to life sentence for several times, but each time he somehow managed to flee from prison and escape the persecution of the Russian police. Usul Khecho took part in the Balkan Wars of 1912 to 1913 as well as at the battles fought for the liberation of the settlements of Van and Bitlis Provinces during World War I, when he was a company commander in the volunteer detachments of Keri and Hamazasp. He was one of the active participants of the self-defense of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak in 1918 as well as the liberation of Lori from the Georgian Mensheviks in 1921. Usul Khecho died in Tabriz either in 1941 or 1942 (Simonian, idem, pp. 137-139, 141, Sanossian, A., idem, pp. 22, 49, 79, 144, 160, 163-165, 173. In an archive document published by M. Karapetian, Usul Khecho, mentioned under the name of Khachatur Karapetian and No. 104, is included in the list of the warriors of the 2nd platoon of the 2nd company of Hamazasp's detachment. **ՆԱՐԱՍՅԵՆՅԱՆ Ա.**, Հայկական կամավորական խմբերը և ազգային զոմարտակները Կովկասյան ռազմաճակատում (1914-1917 թթ.), Ե. (**Karapetian, M.** The Armenian Volunteer Groups and National Battalions on the Caucasian Front. 1914 to 1917. Yerevan), 1999, p. 138.

160 **Varandian, M.**, idem, p. 283.

161 **Ruben**, idem, vol. 1, pp. 215-222. Between 1905 and 1906, no skirmishes occurred in Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak Districts, where the Armenians and Turk Meskhetians lived side by side. The main reason for that was that the Sunni Turks did not defend the Shiah Tatars in their anti-Armenian actions, fearing the possible grave consequences the fighting against the Armenians, forming a majority, was fraught with. Besides, the authorities did not want to use the Meskhetian Turks against the Armenians, fearing Turkey's possible intervention, which was highly undesirable given the ongoing Russo-Japanese war and revolution. By the way, the population of these districts did not take an active part in the first Russian revolution of 1905 to 1907.

162 **Levon Khezarjian** was not a true hajji: he was so called thanks to the high esteem he had earned with his friends.

163 **Ruben**, idem, vol. 1, p. 327.

164 **Idem**, pp. 279-280.

165 **ՆԵՐՍԻՍՅԱՆ Ա.**, Ռուբէն (Մինաս-Տէր Մինասեան), Դրոշակ, 1999, հոկտեմբեր (Nersissian, A. Ruben (Ruben Ter-Minassian. In: "Droshak," October 1999), No. 16, p. 37:

166 **Ruben**, idem, vol. 1, pp. 330-333.

167 **Varandian, M.**, idem, p. 231.

168 "Politika," 1998, Nos. 4-6, pp. 10-11.

169 "Politika," 1998, Nos. 4-6, pp. 11-12.

170 Idem, p. 13.

171 **Կիրակոսյան Ջ. Ս.**, Առաջին համաշխարհային պատերազմը և արևմտահայությունը 1914-1916 թթ., Ե. (**Kirakossian, J. S.** World War I and the Western Armenians between 1914 and 1916. Yerevan), 1965, p. 109:

172 **Արությունյան Ա. Օ.**, Кавказский фронт 1914-1917 гг., Е. (**Harutiunian, A. O.** The Caucasian Front between 1914 and 1917. Yerevan), 1971, p. 162.

173 Չիթող դաշտի Կարնոյ, կազմող՝ Վարդիթեր Կոճուրզեան-Յովհաննիսեան, Բէյրութ (Dzitogh Village of Karin Plain. Compiled by Varditer Kojolozian Hovhannissian. Beirut), 1972, pp. 272, 279, 286, 292: Akhaltskha inhabitant Shavarsh was killed at those battles.

174 **Sanossian, A.**, idem, p. 48. See idem, p. 164, for the photo and surnames of a group of volunteers from Akhaltskha.

175 **Simonian, H. R.** The Times of Andranik, book 1, p. 413.

176 **Նազարյան Ս. Ս.**, «Ջավախք» շաբաթաթերթը, ԲԵՀ (**Nazarian, S. S.** The Javakhk Weekly. In: "Banber Yerevani Hamalsarani"), 1992, No. 1, p. 201:

177 Akhalkalak's Museum of Regional History, file 3674, p. 1; file 3701, p. 1.

178 Vahan Terian in the Memoirs of His Contemporaries, pp. 383-384. N. Ter-Grigorian is poet Vahan Terian's brother.

179 Vahan Terian in the Memoirs of His Contemporaries, pp. 390-393, 412-413.

180 For details about the economic growth of Akhalkalak District in 1917, see a document entitled "Об экономическом положении ахалкалакского уезда" (About the Economic Conditions of Akhalkalak District). Personal Archives of Leo, fund 1, list 1, file 389, pp. 156-157.

CHAPTER THREE

JAVAKHK BETWEEN 1917 AND 1921

The Problem of Akhalkalak Within the Context of the National and Administrative-Territorial Division of Transcaucasia in 1917

In the first years of the Russian Revolution (1905 to 1907), plans were advanced for the introduction of a federal structure, i.e. decentralization of power, establishment of local self-government, and a new administrative division of national territories both in Transcaucasia and the entire Russian Empire. These plans stressed the necessity of unifying Akhalkalak District with Yerevan Province or the future Province of Alexandropol.

Prior to World War I, the issue of the administrative-territorial division of Transcaucasia was again put into consideration in the national and political circles of the region. The Armenian, Georgian, and Tartar (Azerbaijani) politicians argued that Tsarist Russia had totally ignored the ethno-national factor in its division of the provinces. It is interesting to note that certain extremist Georgian nationalists who did not preclude the possibility of Russia's defeat in the upcoming war had established ties with the Government of the Young Turks. In the summer of 1914, the "Committee of Georgia's Liberation" signed a secret agreement with the Turkish authorities, according to which, after the defeat of Russia, Turkey was to secure the independence of Georgia, with Akhalkalak, the Armenian part of Borchalu (Southern Lori - A.M.), and the vicinity of Lake Sevan forming part of it.¹ As rightly pointed out by Bakhshi

Ishkhanian, the appearance of a new anti-Armenian campaign in the contemporary Georgian press is no surprise. The Georgians considered the Armenians opponents of their Turkish-oriented plans and "agents" of the Russian authorities. Furthermore, Ishkhanian writes, "The Georgian government organs keep reminding the Armenians, often in a threatening tone, that they are merely newcomers in the historical homeland of Georgia."²

The aforementioned discussions were resumed after the February Revolution of 1917, when the Russian Empire entered a stage of establishing a democratic system of governance. In the spring and summer of 1917, the Georgian Mensheviks believed the territorial divisions of Transcaucasia should be guided by the ethnographic principle, i.e. the territories should be united with localities inhabited by the same ethnic group. In disputed cases, a referendum should be held. In June the Mensheviks of Transcaucasia adopted a resolution approving the aforementioned approaches. It stated, "A referendum is to be held in those inhabited localities which are regarded as disputed areas in order to determine national borders."³ The other Georgian parties shared this democratic viewpoint.⁴

A conference of the Socialist-Federalists, held in the summer of 1917, decided that the Georgian territories should include only those parts of Borchalu, Akhaltskha, and Akhalkalak Districts of Tiflis Province that were inhabited by the Georgians. Stressing the necessity of a referendum to determine what province Borchalu should join, the Socialist-Federalists thought it quite fair for Akhalkalak and Akhaltskha to be partitioned off from Tiflis Province and form part of an Armenian-inhabited administrative unit. The Georgian National Democrats, however, did not share this just approach, seeing the entire Province of Tiflis as an integral part of future Georgia.⁵

In the event of implementing the Armenian and Georgian political circles' viewpoint, based on the ethnographic principle, in the upcoming administrative-territorial divisions, the unification of the predominantly Armenian-inhabited districts of Borchalu (together with Lori),

Akhalkalak (Tiflis Province), and the southwestern part of Yelizavetpol Province (comprising Karabakh and Zangezur) with either the Province of Yerevan or future Alexandropol would become inevitable. Together with the former Province of Yerevan, these localities would constitute an area of 54,000 square kilometres with a population of 1,970,000, of which 1,169,000 were Armenians, 546,000 Muslims, and 7,000 Georgians, with the remainder representing other nationalities.⁶

In the spring of 1917, the Provisional Government set up an Ad Hoc Committee (chaired by lawyer Zurab Avalov)⁷ at the Ministry of the Interior in Petrograd. This Committee, which was to examine the issue of the administrative redivision and governance of Transcaucasia, decided to partition off the four-fifths of Borchalu, i.e. Lori District and Akhalkalak, from Tiflis Province and unite it with the Province of Alexandropol, that was to be established soon.⁸ In order to secure numerical superiority for the Armenian population in Alexandropol Province, the Armenian representatives of the Committee suggested that the village communities of Ashkala and Nardevan in Trialet (Tzalka) Sub-District, as well as Ghezkelilisa Village and the Armenian-inhabited village of Molit (Bakurian Sub-District, Gori District), should join Akhalkalak District, which was to be partitioned off from Tiflis Province. Alexandropol should also include districts from Lori and Kars Marzes as well as Yerevan Province.⁹

These discussions continued later in Tiflis, where the rights of the Armenians were represented by Alexander Khatissian and Avetis Shahkhatunian.¹⁰ A year later, the latter published a work¹¹ substantiating the expediency of the redivision of Transcaucasia according to the ethnographic principle. This approach was unanimously supported at the All-Armenian Conference held in Tiflis between September and October of 1917. This conference established the National Council of Eastern Armenians, which was to become a pivotal political body in the contemporary Armenian reality. The sessions held on October 6 and 8 approved the plan of the Provisional Government, which provided for the establishment of certain large Georgian, Armenian, and Turkish administrative

units in Transcaucasia according to the ethnic principle.¹² The Armenian administrative unit was to consist of the Provinces of Yerevan, Yelizavetpol (Gandzak), and Alexandropol. As we have already mentioned, Lori and Akhalkalak were to be part of Alexandropol Province. Thus, by endorsing the aforementioned bill, the Armenian political circles officially voiced their support for the national and administrative-territorial policy of the Provisional Government, guided by the fair, democratic ethnographic principle.

It is interesting to note that the Armeno-Georgian united approach to the principle of the administrative redivision of Transcaucasia did not remain on paper and was also approved by Kerensky's Government. The Armenian and Georgian delegates, who had arrived in St. Petersburg, gave their consent to the project, whereas the Turks and Azerbaijanis refused to express their viewpoints under the plea that they were not entitled to do so.¹³ In the autumn of 1917, however, the Georgian political circles, following Azerbaijan's example, changed their position drastically.

Between September and October 1917, the Georgian politicians, especially the National Democrats, declared themselves against the partitioning off of the districts of Borchalu and Akhalkalak from Tiflis Province, which they identified with Georgia's national statehood. Thus, in the process of the aforementioned discussions in 1917, the issue of the administrative division grew into a national, territorial, and state problem.

The period of the October Revolution of 1917 marked the rise of serious aspirations in the Georgian political circles to be separated from Russia. Parallel with that, the ethnographic principle of the administrative redivision of Transcaucasia gradually sank into oblivion. The Georgians manifested an unyielding position on the issues of Lori and Akhalkalak. On the initiative of Diyasamidze, certain Georgian political figures who considered their compatriots' stand rather unfair and actually threatening to the Georgian-Armenian friendly relations held new conferences with the participation of statesmen from both sides. Nonetheless, the dominant

position of the Georgians with regard to the disputed territories was to follow the historical principle. This meant to go by the provisions of the Georgievsk Treaty of 1783, where Empress Catherine II (Catherine the Great) had promised Georgian King Heracle II to yield to Georgia all the conquered territories under foreign domination. The Georgians considered Akhalkalak District one of these territories, although it was evident that the Russian authorities did not confirm the Georgians' historical rights to Javakhk; they were highly disputed and unconvincing. Besides, the Armenian participants in these conferences rightly argued that if historical principles were adopted, the Caucasian Tartars, who were not natives of the region, would be stripped of their rights to any territories there.¹⁴ Thus, the subsequent Armeno-Georgian conferences did not yield any results.

On November 15, OZAKOM was succeeded by the Transcaucasian Commissariat, its establishment being the first serious step of the Caucasian national forces for the partitioning off of the region from Russia. It also promised to subdue inter-national conflicts in Transcaucasia and settle national issues. On November 27, the Commissariat issued a special decree which provided for the introduction of zemstvos (highly restricted local self-government) into the region. This question, which had long been a subject of lengthy discussions, had never received any final settlement due to various discrepancies. This system of governance, however, was not to be put into effect, for it automatically led the authorities to the sore point of the ethnic redivision of Transcaucasia.¹⁵ The Transcaucasian Sejm (Parliament), which came to succeed the Commissariat, consigned the issue of the determination of the internal national borders to oblivion, due to the Turkish invasion and the general anarchy prevailing in the region.

In 1918 Akhalkalak Armenians made an effort to solve the problem in their own manner: on January 21, the Executive Committee of Akhalkalak resolved to make the district an administrative part of Alexandropol District,¹⁶ their decision being a particular manifestation of their aspiration to become part of Armenia.

The Military and Political Situation in Akhalkalak District During the Period Between January and May 1918.

The Turkish Invasion, Massacres and the Deportation of the Local Population

Encouraged by the withdrawal of the Russian army from Transcaucasia, the Turkish High Command started actively preparing for an offensive in late December 1917 and early 1918. The Turks also instigated the Muslims of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak, the so-called "Meskhetian" Turks, to attack Akhaltskha. A young political figure, Akhaltskha's mayor Zori Zorian, 17 years of age, led the city's heroic self-defence. ¹⁷

In late 1917, the National Council of Akhalkalak was organized, led by Mayor Mkrtich Margarian. In November this body established the Armenian Riflemen's Regiment of Akhalkalak¹⁸ and a Provisional Defence Committee, which helped to suppress the unruly acts of the Meskhetians. It should be noted that the Armenians and Georgians acted in unanimity in all their actions against the invaders, thus writing numerous heroic pages in the history of their alliance.

Between February and March of 1918, the Armenians of Gumburdo, Kartzakh, Sulda, and Vachian Villages, in solidarity with the Georgian villages located in the gorge of the river Kur, successfully struggled against the Turks of Hokam, Khavet, and Erinja, lying in the southwest of Akhalkalak District.

Some Armenian detachments organized in Akhalkalak District neutralized the thrusts of the Meskhetian Turks, expelling them from several villages. The Turks had blocked the passageway between Akhalkalak and Akhaltskha in the Aspidza gorge. The Armenians of Akhalkalak, using a dangerous pathway, circumvented the Turks and supplied a considerable amount of wheat to the defenders of Akhaltskha. Cut off from the

outside world, Damala Village fought heroically against the Meskhetian Turks of the adjacent settlements.

To reestablish communication with his birthplace Akhaltskha, famous volunteer Usul Khecho, who was in Javakhk in those days, attempted to break the blockade in the north of Akhalkalak District and reach Damala via Jobaret. Failing to achieve this, he went to Borzhom through Bakurian and applied to Georgian General G Arjevanidze for help. The latter made certain promises, which he never fulfilled. Khecho returned to Akhalkalak and decided to achieve his goal with the local forces.

The main obstacle to reaching the objective was the Turkish village of Kokia. In mid-March, Khecho launched an offensive against Kokia with 1,000 warriors, mostly Dashnaks from the city of Akhalkalak, and fighters from Varevan, Alastan, Azavret and other villages. After a two-day resistance, the Turks of Kokia and several nearby villages fled to Ardahan.

Although the operation of the Armenian warriors was vital and necessary, it was something imprudent and impermissible. First, its organizers did not achieve their main goal, i.e. the liberation of the road to Akhaltskha, and second, it aggravated the Armeno-Turkish relations in the district. Moreover, the Turkish fugitives who had found haven in Ardahan incited the local Muslims to perpetrate massacres of the Armenians there: two thousand women, children, and old people had a narrow escape from that slaughter, finding refuge in Akhalkalak District.

The news of the deplorable state of Ardahan refugees and the acts committed against their relatives enraged the youth of Javakhk, who started taking revenge and committing ill-advised acts. Led by a few local Dashnak and Socialist-Revolutionary leaders, they perpetrated violence against the local Turks, including the Palavandovs, landowners enjoying high popularity in the Muslim community. Thus, the relations between the Christians and Muslims worsened in the province. The local authorities, the Transcaucasian Sejm as well as the Armenian and Georgian National Councils did not take any drastic measures to dissipate the inter-ethnic tension, something so vital on the eve of the impending Turkish

invasion. The Seym confined itself to sending an Inspection Committee comprising representatives of different nationalities, but it failed to achieve any tangible results.¹⁹

The invasion of Vehib Pasha's troops (March to April 1918) and the conquest of the Marz of Kars created a grave situation in Akhalkalak. The Armenian refugees from the Turkish-occupied territories continually flooded the district. Entering into negotiations with the Turkish military figures and the representatives of Ardahan's Muslims, the local inhabitants managed to arrange the exchange of 1,500 Armenians from Olti and Ardahan Districts, mainly women and children, for the inhabitants of Kokia, Tok, and other Turkish villages of the district; this exchange took place in the Georgian village of Saro on April 9, 1918.²⁰

The vital road to Aspindza and Akhaltskha was still under enemy control, the defenders of the latter being in bad need of wheat. In late April, Usul Khecho's armed detachment moved to Damala with the support of Captain Alexidze's battery stationed in the northwest of the district. Damala's inhabitants joined them. The Armeno-Georgian forces were successful in expelling the Turks from the approaches of Damala and liberating Aspindza. Meanwhile, the Akhaltskha group of the Armeno-Georgian alliance freed the Georgian village of Muskh, lying on the road to Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak. However, despite the necessity to advance in a united front, the Georgian troops left Aspindza on the order of the Transcaucasian Seym and retreated first to Damala and thence to Varevan and Bakurian.²¹

In April the Armeno-Georgian united forces showed heroism and valour at the battles fought on the bank of the river Kur. Some of the Muslim fugitives of different Javakhk villages had found refuge in the southwest of Akhalkalak District, posing a grave danger to the population of the small Georgian villages of Zedatmogvi (Upper Tmuk) and Agara, situated in the vicinity of Vardzia. Thanks to the courageous military operations carried out by the warriors of the Armenian village of Gumburdo, the Georgians' slaughter was prevented and they moved safely to the right bank of the river Kur, settling in the villages of Akhalkalak.²²

After these events, the Muslims of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak expanded their espionage activities. On April 13, forty representatives of the local Muslim executive authorities sent a petition to the Turkish High Command raising the issue of uniting Akhaltskha District and the part of Akhalkalak that had been included in Turkey over three centuries with the Ottoman State. Their request was based on the right of self-determination declared by the Russian Revolution. The document particularly stressed that "...the Muslim inhabitants of these districts are mainly of Turkish origin and still retain their spiritual ties with Turkey."²³

It is apparent that the Muslim leaders in their separatist movement referred to the right of self-determination while forgetting to take into account the opinion of the majority of the population. i.e. the Armenians and Georgians. The subsequent events came to prove that this step had been instigated by the Turkish High Command, the Musavatist Faction of the Transcaucasian Sejm having previously approved it.²⁴

Cooperating with the local military, national, and civic bodies, and ignoring the aspirations of the Georgian Council, the Armenian National Council of Tiflis succeeded in exerting some influence over the districts of Borchalu and Akhalkalak (which were considered disputed) and rendering some military aid to Javakhk. "Throughout this period (October 1917 to May 1918 - A.M.), all the districts of our lands, including Akhalkalak and the Armenian part of Borchalu, were only and only under the jurisdiction of the Armenian National Council, any intervention by its Georgian counterpart being excluded," writes Arshak Jamalian.²⁵

Soon Colonel Arakelov was sent to Akhalkalak, where he set up a separate regiment within the Armenian Corps. Unfortunately, Akhalkalak's Russian garrison had taken away most of the ammunition, unlike that of Akhaltskha; that is why, only 2,000 young men could receive arms, although the number of those wishing to be recruited into the regiment amounted to 5,000.

Anyway, it is evident that in the period between late 1917 and mid-May 1918, Javakhk had its own ruling body, which the Transcaucasian Sejm had to reckon with. Perhaps, it was for this very reason that this

body did not take any drastic actions against the Turkish invasion of Akhalkalak. Prominent writer Derenik Demirjian and public figure Poghos Abelian²⁶ (both of them from Akhalkalak in origin) addressed many appeals to the Seym to take Akhalkalak's rich grain reserves out of the district before the Turks could take possession of them, but in vain.²⁷

Seeing that the Seym completely neglected the issue of stationing serious defensive forces in Javakhk, the Armenian National Council started acting independently in late March 1918. Following General Tovmas Nazarbekian's (he was the commander of the Armenian Corps) advice, this body decided to appeal to General Andranik, who had already embarked upon the formation of a new army unit in Alexandropol. Nazarbekian intended to use this regiment either in Merdenek or in Akhalkalak, that were the most vulnerable localities on the route of the Turkish advance.²⁸ General Nazarbekian, however, was unaware of the fact that the Security Council in its turn had planned to send Andranik's forces to Persia and thence to Mesopotamia, where they were to join the English forces. So on April 6, Nazarbekian ordered the Corps Headquarters to send a telegram to Akhalkalak to spread the news of Andranik's arrival without, however, letting him know about that. The following day, Alexandropol received a reassuring telegraph from Colonel Arakelov, the commander of Akhalkalak troops. It said, "I would like to express my sincere happiness about the news that Andranik, that national hero, is going to work in Akhalkalak. I myself would prefer him to arrive even earlier, for his presence is enough to encourage the people, something highly important. I am badly in need of rifles and arms in general."²⁹

Early in April, the National Council, apparently guessing that General Nazarbekian's unexpected decision might arouse Andranik's rightful indignation, officially proposed to him through its representative Paruyr Levonian (minstrel Jivani's son) that he move to Akhalkalak with his 1,400-member army unit to prevent the penetration of the Turks into the region from the Marz of Kars. At first Andranik was rather skeptical about that proposal. He told Levonian that to reach Akhalkalak from

Alexandropol, he would have to encounter the large Turkish population of Aghbaba (Amasia) and the enormous Turkish forces that had flooded into those areas. "My forces are insufficient to get to Akhalkalak through them and that, with only a thousand soldiers, which means having only some 600 to 700 rifles." Andranik also pointed out that he was unfamiliar with the district and its terrain, which only increased the imprudence of such a step. "I know every single gorge, hill, and canyon in Armenia like the palm of my hand, but this country (Akhalkalak -A.M.) which I see on the map is completely unknown to me."³⁰

The subsequent events, however, showed that Andranik obeyed the military discipline and tried to carry out the aforementioned plan. Although he was unfamiliar with Javakhk, he had fought in Western Armenia for many decades side by side with fidayis from Akhalkalak in origin. Having close ties with famous figures like Ruben Ter-Minassian, Hamo Ohanjanian, Ruben Darbinian, and others, he could not remain indifferent to the fate of Javakhk Armenians. Moreover, by defending the Alexandropol-Akhalkalak line, he would fortify the right wing of the Armenian forces, thus barring the Turks' advance to Lori and Tiflis. Indeed, as academician H. Simonian rightly wrote, it was almost impossible to protect that line with such a small number of warriors, but the extremely restricted defensive means completely warranted that action.

Leaving Alexandropol "on April 10, 1918, our detachment moved in the direction of Akhalkalak, having been previously ordered by General Andranik not to cross the frontier line fixed by the armistice with Turkey, i.e. the river Akhurian,"³¹ writes First Lieutenant of the Armenian Shock Troops Kolmakov.

Moving towards the north of Shirak and reaching Gyurjiyol (Thoros) Village, on April 13, Andranik's unit occupied positions along the road of Ashotsk-Lori, which was of high strategic significance, and at the entrance of the mountain pass of Karakhach, i.e. in Duzkharaba (present-day Hartashen) and Chiftli (Zuygaghbyur) Villages. Advancing still farther, they reached Ghazanchi Village on April 14 and engaged in a battle against the local Turks and Kurds. The enemy was unable to stand up to the Armenians

and retreated towards the right bank of the stream Ghalicha, a tributary of the river Akhurian (during this fighting, Andranik's Shock Troops received their first baptism of fire). Then they approached Akhalkalak District, with a considerable part of Ashotsk Plain, including Ghazanchi, Shishtapa (Sepasar), Chiftli, and Bozyokhushali (Musayelian) coming under their control.³² Most of the Armenian peasants who had left their villages for fear of Aghbaba's Turks and Kurds returned to their homes. However, the Turkish army, that had conquered the entire Marz of Kars almost without encountering any resistance, managed to reach the banks of the river Akhurian on April 16. Another enemy unit reached the area of the source of the Akhurian through the help of Aghbaba's Turks, posing a serious danger for the road connecting Ashotsk and Javakhk.

Under these grave circumstances, General Nazarbekian, who was seriously concerned with the possible collapse of the Armenian troops, telegraphed Andranik from Alexandropol with an assignment to extend the defensive line from Gyulibulagh (Vardaghbyur) Village up to the southern borders of Akhalkalak District with the Shock Troops. This telegram, preserved in the National Archives of Armenia, reads, "Taking into account the change in the status quo..., I am ordering You to urgently penetrate into the territory of Lake Khanchal Gyol and Mardatapinskoye with Your detachment and fortify Your positions there, keeping peace in the south of Akhalkalak District and establishing control over the border of Kars Marz."³³

Andranik faced new obstacles while fulfilling this highly difficult assignment: many Western Armenian fighters who did not want to stay under the control of commanders unknown to them deserted their barracks and joined his Shock Troops in the Plain of Ashotsk. Thus, the number of Andranik's soldiers amounted to 2,600, despite the fact that he himself did not encourage that.³⁴

On May 2, Andranik, who was in Gyulibulagh, addressed a letter to Akhalkalak's Armenian National Council asking it to provide his unit with food at reasonable prices. The Council, however, turned down the Commander's request because the resources the district had could hardly

suffice for the local 3,500-member regiment and the 6,000 refugees from Alashkert (Ardahan - A. M.). V. Ayvazian, the charge d'affaires of the National Council, humbly asked Andranik not to interpret that answer "...as a step to avoid satisfying the needs of their own people. Simply, we need to let You know the conditions facing Akhalkalak."³⁵

The Armenian National Council and certain political circles held the viewpoint that it was wrong to send Andranik to the Alexandropol-Akhalkalak part of the Turkish front. The opinion was that Andranik's fighters might take some imprudent actions and break the armistice, which provided for the fixing of a new front line between the belligerents. What was even more probable, the Turks, who regarded the General with particular intolerance, might resume the offensive and cross the river Akhurian. This position was also shared by President of the Security Council Koms (Vahan Papazian), who thought it more expedient to withdraw Andranik's forces to a safer area. In fact, it was the Turks who violated the truce by crossing the demarcation line near the village of Ghazanchi and putting to sword the Armenian inhabitants of Ashotsk Plain.

Under those circumstances, Andranik declined to go to Akhalkalak and arrived at Vorontsovka (present-day Tashir) via the impregnable mountain pass of Karakhach. As a result, the Turkish troops advanced towards Ashotsk and Javakhk without any difficulty and conquered Shirak-Ashotsk.

A Turkish unit moved in the direction of Akhalkalak District from the south, followed by another group of enemy soldiers who invaded Javakhk from the side of Cheldr, i.e. from the southwest, on May 7 (20), 1918. The Turks' insolence and wilfulness in crossing the river Akhurian and penetrating into Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak aroused discontent even among Turkey's allies. On May 15, General Von Losov wrote the following letter addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany, "The outrageous demands of the Turks with regard to the all-Armenian provinces of Akhalkalak, Alexandropol, and Yerevan clearly reveal their occupation plans concerning territories that are not provided for by the

Treaty of Brest. They also manifest their desire to exploit Caucasia and exterminate the Armenians in Transcaucasia."³⁶ In fact, on the evening of May 26 (according to the new calendar), Khalil Pasha delivered an ultimatum to Chkhenkeli, the Speaker of the Transcaucasian Sejm, which had declared itself non-functioning earlier on the same day. He demanded that half of Yerevan District, a considerable part of Echmiatzin, Nakhijevan, and Sharur-Daralagyaz Districts, as well as the entire districts of Surmalu, Alexandropol, Akhalkalak, and Akhaltskha should be yielded up to them.

In Akhalkalak, a small number of poorly-armed detachments, consisting of local inhabitants, managed to put up a brief resistance against the enemy in the vicinity of Mount Gyok Dag, near Kartzakh. Instead of fighting at the front, Colonel Arakelov continued "leading" the operations of the self-defense forces from a distance of 25 to 30 kilometres.³⁷

The groups led by former servicemen of the Russian army Ledwig Demirjian, Khoren Mnoyan, and Zarmayr Khanoyan, as well as Poghos Abelian from Tiflis and Russian officer Reznikov secured the resettlement of the district's population through a series of heavy battles.³⁸ The Georgian detachment, which was under the jurisdiction of the Georgian National Council, left the front without participating in the battle.

The inhabitants of the district's northern villages, about 40 thousand in number, migrated to Bakurian, while those of the southern ones, 30 to 35 thousand, settled mainly in Tzalka, leaving behind all their belongings. They did not even manage to take their reserves of flour, amounting to hundreds of thousands of poods (*an ancient Russian unit of weight equal to 16.38 kg*), and the wheat harvest, amounting to 10 million poods.³⁹ In those days, Father Arsen Belrtsian wrote the following in the "Horizon" newspaper, "The refugees, who were leaving their homes under a barrage of enemy gunfire, did not even manage to take any of their belongings, leaving everything in the villages. Many Armenians have been taken captive."⁴⁰ By the end of May, the populations of the whole city of Akhalkalak and 61 Armenian villages had already been reduced to fugitives. The Turkish-speaking Armenian Catholics and

Russian Dukhobors were the only ones who had not abandoned their settlements.⁴¹

The invading Turks and local Meskhetians slaughtered the remaining population and plundered the villages. The rest of those captured were divided in two groups: one, comprising hundreds of men capable of working, was exiled to Turkey; the other, consisting of more than a thousand old people and women, was banished to refugee camps in Bakurian.

The Armenian inhabitants of Khorenia and Takhcha Villages were to face a grave disaster; when most of the former, about 800 people, had reached the foot of Mount Abul on their way to Tzalka, some Turkish spies persuaded them to return to their settlement, assuring them that no danger threatened their lives. Then these people and another 300 inhabitants of Takhcha were locked in barns and slaughtered violently.⁴² The Turkish bandits also slaughtered the populations of Metz Aragyal, Gumburdo, Abul and Bezhanó as well as Akhalkalak City.

The massacres of the Armenian population could have spread even wider if they had not defended themselves in certain places. It was especially on the outskirts of Satkha that the Turks encountered firm resistance.⁴³ To suppress the resistance of Javakhk, the Turks had to bring in reinforcements from the 9th Caucasian Regiment of Riflemen stationed in Vorontsovka.

General Arjevanidze, the Commander of the Georgian troops stationed in Borzhom, not only refused to render any military or financial aid to the Armenians, but he also disarmed the Armenian volunteers who had left the district on June 5, after having accompanied the last groups of fugitives. Obeying an order received from the Georgian National Council, the Georgian general banned Akhalkalak refugees from resettling in the township of Bakurian (north and northwest of it) and other districts in Georgia. "In Bakurian the Georgian Government confiscated the horses and rifles of the Armenian refugees," wrote the "Horizon" newspaper.⁴⁴

The fugitives who reached Tiflis through numerous obstacles were surrounded by the Georgian army units at Navtlugh Station and forcibly

returned to their compatriots who had found refuge in Tzalka and the woods of Bakurian. It was only the Georgians who were allowed to move into the depths of Georgia,⁴⁵ whereas those who had reached North Caucasia, mainly Vladikavkaz, were denied access to that country.

As was already mentioned, thanks to the prudent policy of Zori Zorian, after the self-defence of Akhaltskha, the district acknowledged the supremacy of Turkish rule by mutual consent: thus, it escaped deportation and extermination, which befell Akhalkalak.

Soon the Turkish High Command made a declaration about their intention to recognize Akhalkalak and Akhaltskha as parts of the Southwestern Turkish Republic, that was being "established" in Transcaucasia. Soon the Ottoman administrative system was introduced everywhere. Landowner Yason Bey from Khospia was appointed Provisional Governor of Akhalkalak District. Myudirs (village elders) were appointed in villages. The Turks took possession of all the effects the Armenians had left in their settlements, now inhabited by Muslims, like the devastated Georgian villages. Thus, the region entered upon a six-month period of Turkish rule, characterized by devastation. In retaliation, Armenian underground groups emerged in some mountainous regions and in the city. They took revenge upon some Turkish officials and succeeded in saving part of the property the district's former inhabitants had hidden in different places.⁴⁶

In order to harvest the rich crops of wheat ripening in Akhalkalak, the Turkish military powers turned to the inhabitants of the neighboring districts. They also turned to Zorian, who had stayed in Akhaltskha and worked to maintain peace between the district's Christians and Turkish authorities on one hand, and between the former and the Turkish population on the other (his high popularity and flexible demeanor helped him much in his efforts). On his order, a great number of Akhaltskha inhabitants moved to Akhalkalak with their agricultural tools as a "manifestation of good will." The Armenians, however, were to experience rather harsh conditions, working up to 12 hours daily without any payment. In contrast to that, the local Turks and other Muslims from the interior of the

Empire were allowed to appropriate part of the gathered crops. Despite that, still new groups arrived from Akhaltskha, most of them even taking part in the transportation of more than a million poods of corn to some remote areas in the Ottoman Empire on their own carts.⁴⁷

The Armeno-Georgian Border Disputes after the Declaration of Independence of the Transcaucasian Republics (May to August 1918)

The three Transcaucasian republics came into being in the days of Akhalkalak's mass deportation. On May 30, the Armenian National Council issued a Declaration of Independence, in which it proclaimed itself the supreme and only authority in the Armenian districts. The indefinite phrase "Armenian districts" was not a self-serving statement. On the one hand, the National Council thus avoided the danger of being involved in political, territorial and regional disputes with Ottoman Turkey and the newly-established neighboring states; on the other, it stated its rights to the Armenian territories whose borders had not been verified yet. Thus, "Armenian districts" could imply Western Armenia, Karabakh, Javakhk, and other disputed territories.

The Georgian Mensheviks, however, took more practical steps to settle the issue of the disputed districts to their advantage. Not only did they prepare the declaration of independence of their republic with Germany's representative Von Losov, but they were also assured by the latter that the disputed districts of Akhalkalak and Borchalu would be recognized as parts of Georgia.⁴⁸ It is by no means accidental that early in June 1918, they established control over North Lori (South Lori was occupied by the Turks) under the auspices of the Germans. In Batum on June 4, the Georgians signed a Peace Treaty with the Ottoman Empire entitling themselves to yield up the predominantly Armenian-populated districts of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak to the Turks.

We do not think that such a step by the Georgians was conditioned only by their inability to resist the Turks. Rather, it pursued a far-reaching objective: first, it created an impression that the newly-established

state of Georgia, like Armenia, had made serious territorial concessions to victorious Turkey. Second, being a signatory of an international treaty, Georgia was establishing its own rights in the determination of the destinies of those districts. If Turkey suffered defeat in the subsequent wars, Georgia was entitled to restore its "legal" right to Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak. Finally, what is most painful, the Turkish occupation of Javakhk could drastically change the district's demographic picture, namely it could strip it of its ethnic Armenian make-up. The subsequent events came to reveal the chauvinistic plans of the Georgian political circles.

As for the steadfast determination of the Turkish authorities to annex Akhaltskha, Akhalkalak, and Borchalu to the Ottoman state, it reflected their striving to restore the predominance of Turkey in Transcaucasia. If accomplished, the Turks would establish direct ties with Azerbaijan and drive a wedge between Georgia and Armenia. Alexander Khatissian, the head of the Armenian delegation during the negotiations of Batum, writes, "They desired to use Borchalu as a link between Akhalkalak and Karabakh, thus detaching us from Georgia."⁴⁹

It is interesting to note that, unlike the Georgians, the Armenian delegation in Batum had a clearer idea about the vital necessity of the Armeno-Georgian common frontier, which was to be secured through Borchalu and Akhalkalak. Therefore, it is by no means incidental that the Armenian side flatly refused to accept Halil Pasha's (he was the head of the Turkish delegation) suggestion that Turkey should "cede" a territory of 2.5 square kilometres in an area adjoining the Armeno-Turkish border, in return for Armenia's consent to deliver up Lori and Akhalkalak to that state.⁵⁰ Despite that, however, the Armenians had to face the harsh reality: the Georgian side had already given its accord to the annexation of Akhalkalak by Turkey. Alexander Khatissian and Hovhannes Kajaznuni had no other alternative but to meet the demands of the Turkish delegates and hand over the Marz of Kars, the Districts of Alexandropol and Hamamlu, as well as a considerable part of the Ararat Valley, together with Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak.

In compliance with the Treaty of Batum, the Ottoman Empire assumed control over Armenian and Armenian-inhabited districts, this being the result of a persistent policy conducted by the Georgian-Azerbaijani majority of the Transcaucasian Federation. The new geopolitical situation was favorable to the Georgians and Caucasian Tartars (Azerbaijanis). Taking advantage of Armenia's grave conditions, the Mensheviks and Musavatists put forward territorial claims on Armenia. H. Avetissian's remarkable observations reveal that the Georgians, forming only 28 per cent of Transcaucasia's population, were given 33 per cent (61,000 square kilometres) of the region's territory. The Caucasian Muslims, constituting 43 per cent of the entire population, received 38 per cent (70,000 square kilometres), whereas the Armenians, who made up 29 per cent of Transcaucasia's population, could lay claims to only 29 per cent (54.5,000 square kilometres) of land. Despite this, however, they had to endure their neighbors' territorial claims, those of Georgia, including the district of Akhalkalak occupied by Turkey, amounting to 13,000 square kilometres with 261,000 Armenians and only 7,000 Georgians.⁵¹

In his turn, Vehib Pasha hurried to take advantage of the Armeno-Georgian disagreements. In June he sent a telegram to General Nazarbekian, trying to convince him that the Turkish army's occupation of Lori and Borchalu, considered disputed between Armenia and Georgia, had the objective of preventing any possible armed conflicts between Armenia and Georgia, and that it was in the interests of the Armenians.⁵²

It was in this complex strategic-political situation that early in June, the Armenian and Georgian National Councils commenced negotiations to verify the borders of the two newly-established republics. President of Georgia's National Council N. Zhordania and Prime Minister N. Ramishvili suggested that the Armenian National Council, represented by Avetis Aharonian, Hovhanness Kajaznuni, and Alexander Khatissian, be guided by the ethnographic principle when determining the fate of Borchalu District. The issue of Akhalkalak was not even included in the agenda, for it was under Turkish control and the Georgians saw it as part

of Georgia in the future. Soon, however, Irakli Tsereteli, the head of the Georgian delegation, declared to the Ad Hoc Committee of Border Determination (Kh. Karjikian, G. Khatissian, and G. Ghorghanian), set up by the Armenian National Council, that Georgia, out of strategic considerations, could not cede Lori, Akhalkalak, Pambak and Alexandropol. The Georgian politician was trying to convince the Armenian side that this policy was in the interests of the Armenian populations of these areas, since it would give them security in Germany-supported Georgia. Karjikian protested against this approach which ignored the ethno-national principle. He characterized the Georgian Mensheviks' approach as a policy aimed at partitioning Armenia among Turkey, Georgia, and Azerbaijan.⁵³

Given the discrepancies between both sides, it was decided to investigate the issue further and hold a new conference in which the parties were expected to make concessive suggestions acceptable to both sides. Thus, the question of the disputed territories was to remain unsettled until the next meeting. Despite that, in the following days, the Georgian press was flooded with articles stating that the Democratic Republic of Georgia had already fixed the future Armeno-Georgian frontier according to its own discretion: thus, the Armenian part of Borchalu, Ghazakh (present-day Ijevan District – A. M.), Pambak and Akhalkalak would be within the borders of future Georgia (once the Turks abandoned them). In contrast, the Armenian Government, intending to achieve the settlement of the issue only through peaceful means, declared at the General Assembly on August 3 that the Armenian side desired to “arrive at mutual agreement with Atropatene (present-day Azerbaijan - A. M.) and Georgia, and settle the questions of Armenia’s frontiers with these states, guided by only the ethno-national principle, which was in the spirit of democratic countries.”⁵⁴ Due to the mutually exclusive positions held by the parties, in the summer the Armeno-Georgian conferences reached a deadlock. They were resumed only in the autumn, when the Turks started leaving the occupied territories.

The Problem of Akhalkalak Refugees (May to December 1918)

The condition of Akhalkalak deportees was continuously deteriorating. They were in an unusual isolation: the Georgian troops had blocked the northern roads to Borzhom and Bakurian, while the Turks had barred the return roads to the districts.

Early in July 1918, the Armenian National Council applied to the Georgian Government with a petition to grant the fugitives permission to move to the depths of Georgia and find shelter in the settlements of those Muslims who had left Borchalu. The Georgian authorities rejected it, with the justification of preventing the spread of epidemics in Georgia.⁵⁵ The chauvinistic Georgian press defended its Government's decision; moreover, it even attempted to accuse the Armenian National Council, especially its Dashnak members, of intrigues plotted against the Georgian people. The July 19 issue of the "Ertoba" newspaper stated that the Dashnaks, who had provoked enmity between the Armenians and Tartars, by now enabling the Armenian refugees to penetrate into their country,⁵⁶ wanted to spread various epidemics among the Georgian people.

All of that, no doubt, was a fabrication. First, there were no epidemics in June and July; they started threatening the refugees only in the autumn. Even if that excuse held true, it could not have relieved Georgia of its responsibility for its own citizens, namely the fugitives of Akhalkalak. Instead of attending to their "duties," General Arjevanidze's last detachments abandoned the northern borderline of Akhalkalak District, providing the Turkish bandits and the local gangs with a brilliant opportunity to inflict still further damage upon the deportees through constant attacks.⁵⁷ Famous novelist Aksel Bakunts writes, "Did Georgia help the Armenian people when the Turks were trampling them underfoot and slaughtering them mercilessly? Was it unable to do so? Did it not have enough power for that...? Was it absolutely unable to at least alleviate those wretches' sufferings and reduce the number of the victims when the Armenians of Akhalkalak were being exterminated by thousands throughout many months?"⁵⁸ Soon the authorities of Telav, Seghnakh, Suram, and other

districts instigated the local Georgian inhabitants to demand the expulsion of the Armenian refugees from their settlements.⁵⁹

Through the support of the Armenian National Council, Javakhk Armenians living in Tiflis established Akhalkalak Armenians' Union. The Board consisted of 10 people, including prominent public figures Poghos Abelian (Secretary), B. Ohanjanian (President), Gr. Papoyan (Vice-president), as well as Hovhannes Malkhassian, Jalal Ter-Grigorian, and K. Shahparonian.⁶⁰ Through an appeal addressed to Tiflis Armenians, this body succeeded in raising some funds for the fugitives.

The refugees of Akhalkalak sent a delegation to Akhaltskha to appeal to the Turkish High Command for permission to return to their native district. Their request was flatly refused. Without hiding their plans of including the District of Akhalkalak in the Empire, the Turks decreed that Muslim resettlers from Turkey inhabit the once-Armenian villages. The Young Turks, who were adamant about their anti-Armenian plans of completely depopulating Akhalkalak and annexing it to Turkey, remained absolutely firm in their decisions, without even yielding to the numerous intercessions made by different Armenian organizations, foreign charity societies, and even General Von Kres, Germany's representative.⁶¹ On July 22, the Armenian authorities addressed a petition to Germany suggesting that German troops be stationed in the districts occupied by the Turks, including Akhalkalak, to stop the carnage and plunder there.⁶² That plan, however, was not implemented; the Turkish military authorities, carried away with their victories in Transcaucasia, were violently opposed to the presence of German troops in any districts, particularly Baku. They even preferred to worsen their relations with their chief ally rather than change their policy.

The deportees of Javakhk, stripped of any freedom of movement by both the Georgian Government and Turkish High Command, were doomed to extermination. In the month of August, when the weather was still hot, up to one hundred people died daily.⁶³ Touching upon the inhumane attitude of the Georgian powers, A. Jamalian, Armenia's diplomatic representative in Georgia, wrote with bitter pain, "We mention this

fact, not to rekindle the pain of our grave losses, but to show that Zhordania and his colleagues ... do not regard the Armenian inhabitants of Borchalu and Akhalkalak as citizens of their republic. Rather, they view them as undesirable newcomers whose pains and sorrows are beyond their responsibility.”⁶⁴

Soon rose a new storm of protests and petitions issued from the Government of Armenia and the Union of Akhalkalak Armenians. They appealed to let the fugitives move to Georgia or grant them permission to return to Akhalkalak. In response to these requests, on October 4, Kozhukhov, the head of the Office of the Georgian Government, sent an official letter to the Main Refugee Council of the Armenians. As he stated, the Georgian authorities suggested that the fugitives move either to North Caucasus or to the Republic of Armenia within the shortest possible time period; this was because Georgia was in a grave food crisis and the Turkish military authorities had refused to let the Armenians return to their homeland. Artashes Abeghian rightly pointed out, “The Georgian Government should have rendered help to the dying Armenians of Akhalkalak if not out of elementary humanism, at least out of political prudence, to show that they did not abandon them in the days of grave calamity, so that they could later “substantiate” their “supreme rights” to Akhalkalak.”⁶⁵

At the initiative of Samson Harutiunian, the leader of the Armenian People’s Party and Chairman of the Refugee Council, an urgent meeting⁶⁶ was convened with the participation of the leadership of the Georgian Armenians’ National Council. Poghos Abelian, who represented the Armenians of Akhalkalak at that conference, told those present that Abdul Kerim, the head of the Turkish Mission, had informed him that the Turks were leaving Akhalkalak and did not mind the Armenians’ returning there. Moreover, the Armenian delegation in Constantinople, headed by Avetis Aharonian, had reached an agreement concerning that issue with the Turkish Government. The participants of the gathering demanded that Kozhukhov hand them the copy of the document in which the Turks refused to grant the Armenians permission to return. No answer

followed; it became apparent that the Georgian Government itself was against the return of the Armenians, laying all the blame on the Turks. As if to prove this revelation, soon the Turkish High Command made an official declaration that the fugitives of Akhalkalak would be permitted to return to their settlements before the removal of their troops, i.e. December 4. It was evident that in such a manner they were artificially forcing the refugees into starvation.⁶⁷

Meanwhile, the conditions of these people were becoming fatal. The days had grown colder, it often rained, and the number of cattle was gradually diminishing. The Georgian authorities permitted hundreds of bandits and speculators from Kutayis, Gori, and Borzhom to buy tens of thousands of head of cattle at meager prices. Sometimes they even took them forcibly, through the help of the Georgian police. "Gangsterism and robbery have become a commonplace in the woods of Bakurian and in the district in general. Armed groups of thieves attack the Armenian refugees and rob them of their oxen, cows, sheep, horses, and money..."⁶⁸ Through the implementation of this special policy, the Georgian Government settled the food crisis that had permeated through its population.

The entire burden of the refugees' needs and sorrows was shouldered by the Armenian Refugee Council, the Union of Akhalkalak Armenians, the Armenian Charity Society in Caucasia, the American Mission in Georgia as well as partly by the National Council of Georgian Armenians and Arshak Jamalian. The National Council appointed Arshak Thorossian and Ararat Ter-Grigorian permanent representatives of Armenia in Bakurian and Tzalka respectively.⁶⁹ The refugees appointed Father Mesrop Meleyan as their representative. Some clergymen, teachers and, especially, Father Arsen Belrtsian rendered tangible aid to the famine-stricken refugees. The latter issued numerous press publications and addressed letters to different official organizations and NGO's, thus managing to raise a considerable amount of money. However, the fugitives formed such a vast multitude (they were between 80,000 and 85,000) that their help was merely a grain in the immense ocean of need and misery.

By December 1918, typhus and cholera had already mown down thou-

sands of people. In that connection, Poghos Abelian wrote, "The refugees of Akhalkalak are being exterminated at such frightening speed that if no steps are taken to save them, this generation of Akhalkalak Armenians will be the last on the earth."⁷⁰

In the period between June and November 1918, more than 18,000 Armenians died in the forests of Bakurian. Almost the same number of their compatriots perished in the districts of Tzalka and Manglis. By the spring of 1919, the refugees of Akhalkalak had suffered 40,000 losses.⁷¹

The Problem of Javakhk in Late 1918 and 1919

In compliance with the armistice signed with the Entente in Mudros on October 30, 1918, Turkey started withdrawing its troops to the frontier of 1914. Consequently, the Turkish army was to pull out of the districts of Akhalkalak and Akhaltskha, and automatically, the issues of the belonging of these territories and the return of the refugees emerged.

In November 1918, overcoming different obstacles posed by the Georgian authorities and often by circumventing them, the surviving refugees of Akhalkalak started returning to their ruined and plundered settlements. In exchange for permission to those returning from Bakurian, the Georgian military authorities demanded signed consents that they accepted Georgian citizenship and recognized the district as part of Georgia.⁷² Thus, the subsequent events came to strain the Armeno-Georgian relations.

Foreseeing the dangerous political consequences of Georgia's claims on Javakhk, the Armenian Government tried to find some diplomatic settlement of the problem. G. Khatissian and Armenia's Minister of Foreign Affairs S. Tigranian had a meeting with Georgia's representative in Armenia B. Mdivany in Yerevan on November 12. They stated that prior to and during the 1917 Revolution, the Georgian Social Democrats and Hay Heghapokhakan Dashnaktsutjun had achieved an agreement that the predominantly Armenian-inhabited district of Akhalkalak, the southern part of Gori District adjoining it in the north (the Armenian villages in the vicinity of Lake Tabatzghur - A. M.), and Borchalu (up to the river

Khram) were to be part of Armenia. Mdivany telegraphed this conversation to Tiflis⁷³ and received a negative answer. Moreover, the Georgians intensified violence against the Armenians in Lori, which had been annexed to Georgia.

Under such circumstances, Armenia did not participate in the "international" conference held in Tiflis on November 14 and attended by the representatives of Georgia, Azerbaijan and the Highlanders' Republics of North Caucasia. The conference was interrupted after a day of deliberation, to be resumed on November 20, with the participation of the representative of Armenia.⁷⁴ Foreign Minister of Georgia Ye. Gegechkori ordered Mdivany "to make the Armenian Government understand that the conference will reconvene without the Armenians' participation, if the latter be absent."⁷⁵ To avoid deteriorating the relations between the two states, the Armenian side accepted the Georgians' rather cold and tough "invitation," provided that the negotiations be bilateral, i.e. between the Armenians and Georgians, without the participation of the other Caucasian republics. Mdivany, in a telegram on November 17, attempted to orientate his Government towards accepting the prerequisite of the Armenian side. The Georgian Government agreeing to it, November 30 was set for the reconvening of the conference.⁷⁶

It seemed that the tension in the Armeno-Georgian relations had softened and a peaceful solution was on the way. The Turks, however, changed the situation drastically by a peculiar "intervention." Before leaving the territories considered disputed,⁷⁷ on November 20 to 25, the Turkish High Command, simultaneously and secretly, i.e. without the knowledge of either of the sides, told the Governments of Armenia and Georgia that they were yielding up the districts to them. The Georgians did not hesitate to "take advantage" of that opportunity and immediately proceeded to active steps.⁷⁸

On November 29, the Georgian Government presented its "new" position on the territorial issues. According to it, the Armeno-Georgian border was to run along the southern frontier of the former Tiflis Province, which meant that Lori and Akhalkalak were to be parts of Georgia. This

declaration was followed by more practical measures: the Georgian Department of Akhalkalak was established, a Georgian governor was appointed for the district, and troops were put into preparedness.

In response to Georgia's actions, which contradicted the former agreements to solve the disputes by peaceful means based on ethnic principles, Foreign Minister of Armenia S. Tigranian presented a protest against Georgia on December 2. He particularly said, "In the agreement on the border issues, the representatives of Armenia and Georgia once prioritized the ethnographic principle." The reservations expected of Georgia for this stand might have arisen out of topographical considerations only. So the assertions of the Armenian side were on firm grounds. Therefore, "the entire district of Akhalkalak and most of Borchalu District with their predominantly Armenian population constitute inseparable parts of Armenia."⁷⁹

The Armenian side, faithful to the agreements of the Armenian and Georgian political parties of 1917, had not neglected the proviso on behalf of Georgia "conditioned by topographical considerations." Although the Armenians enjoyed numerical superiority over the Georgians in the part of North Borchalu extending up to Tiflis, Armenia regarded it as part of the Georgian Republic, cherishing a hope that the Armenians would be granted national and cultural autonomy there. If the Georgians did not accept the aforementioned agreements, once achieved by mutual consent, the Armenian Government was ready to reconsider the issue of North Borchalu, which was mainly populated by Armenians, and was to be given to Georgia, as has already been mentioned.⁸⁰

On December 1, the Armenian Government discussed the issue of stationing regular army units in Akhalkalak District. Military Minister Hovhannes Hakhverdian, however, informed that a special conference held with the participation of such high-ranking officers like Silikian, Dro, Dolukhanian, and Zinkevich had decided to refrain from such a step for the time being, "...taking into account the impending complications on the southern frontier and a number of other facts..." Finding the arguments of the Minister well-grounded, the Armenian Government decided

“... to authorize him not to deploy troops to Akhalkalak District and confine itself to only some preparatory actions for a while.”⁸¹

The subsequent events came to prove that the policy of the Armenian Government, as guided by its military leadership's advice, was not justified. First, it was rather vague what complications awaited the Republic in the south. If the military implied the danger posed by Turkey, it was far from possible. The Turks were unable to mount another offensive against the Armenians; moreover, they had officially told the Governments of both Armenia and Georgia to station their own troops in Javakhk. Turkey had left the occupied territories in Transcaucasia in accordance with the Treaty of Mudros. No imminent danger was expected from the friendly state of Persia either. That “cautious” policy was rather the result of being irresolute and indecisive in orientation and as we will see later, it cost a heavy price to Armenia and Javakhk. It is by no means accidental that when the Armenian authorities finally took some actions with regard to Javakhk, they failed to achieve tangible results.

Perhaps, the only argument warranting the hesitation and indecisiveness of the Armenian Government could be the fact that Javakhk's neighbor Shirak, the passageway from Yerevan to Akhalkalak, was still under Turkish control in those days (it was only on December 6 that the last Turkish troops were withdrawn from Alexandropol District). This argument, however, was not firmly-grounded, for it was quite possible to overcome this obstacle. Some documents reveal that the Government's decision not to deploy army units to Javakhk was carried out only partly.

The High Command of the Armenian Army, unaware that the Turkish troops had left Alexandropol District, several days later, probably on December 6, deployed a small detachment of mounted soldiers from Gharakilisa to Akhalkalak via Tzalka. This group managed to penetrate into the south of the district, i.e. the neighborhood of Yefremovka and Troyitskoye Villages. This incident is attested by the High Command of the Georgian troops moving to Javakhk. They called upon the Georgian authorities to take measures to settle the current situation, to prevent an undesirable armed conflict with the Armenian squadron, which had

entered Bogdanovka.⁸² Armenia, however, again hesitated and thus, the Georgians occupied the essential parts of the district, namely its central and northern parts.

On December 5, S. Tigranian addressed an official letter to Mdivany suggesting that the Georgians should abstain from occupying Akhalkalak and, rather, the countries should start negotiating over the issue.⁸³ The Armenian Government, however, was unaware that on the same day, i.e. on the morning of December 5, Georgia, which had already annexed Lori⁸⁴ by that time, had also stationed troops under the command of General Makayev (Maghashvili) in Javakhk and occupied its center, Akhalkalak.

The small Armenian detachment was forced to abandon the district to avoid confrontation with the Georgian forces that outnumbered it.⁸⁵ It is more than strange that in his answer to the Armenian side's telegram on December 7, Georgia's Foreign Minister Ye. Gegechkori explained that the advance of his country's army into Akhalkalak was guided by the necessity of defending the interests of the local population, and also by the "fact" that Akhalkalak belonged to Georgia from historical, political, and moral standpoints. Nothing was mentioned about the ethnic-national make-up of the district. Strangely enough, after the imprudent step of occupying the district and having the Armenians face this reality, "the Georgians remained convinced of the fact that it (the conquest of Akhalkalak - A.M.) could have absolutely no influence on the process of the talks of territorial division..."⁸⁶

Under the guise of keeping "law and order" in Akhalkalak, the Georgian army disarmed the local self-defense forces and established strict control over the entire district by December 10. They set up a Georgian Executive Body and started posing obstacles for the returning refugees.

On December 16, the Armenian National Assembly approved Kajaznuni's Government's belated steps aimed at securing safety for the Armenian inhabitants of Borchalu and Akhalkalak Districts and liberating them from the Georgian army units. The legislative body also adopt-

ed a special decision to grant the Government absolute freedom of action. Meanwhile, the Assembly accepted Captain Green's (the representative of the English High Command in Transcaucasia) suggestion that Armenia should abstain from armed conflicts and start talks, provided that the Armenian troops would not leave the disputed territories until the local Armenians were protected from the Georgian forces.⁸⁷ The Armenian Government again protested against the occupation of Lori and Akhalkalak, but the Georgians remained firm in their position. Thus, in mid-December began an Armeno-Georgian war, the Turks having played a pivotal role in its unleashing, as already mentioned above.

The news of the war was received with sadness by the Armenian press, national organizations, and political parties. At the same time, judging fairly the approaches taken by the Government, they fully supported the action.⁸⁸

The Armenian forces led by Dro liberated most of Lori. On December 11 and 12, a battalion of the 4th Infantry Regiment of the Armenian Division moved to Akhalkalak from Alexandropol and engaged in a fight against the Georgians. It succeeded in establishing control over most of the district, forcing the enemy to retreat north.⁸⁹ On December 17, Georgian Prime Minister N. Zhordania made a speech in the Georgian Parliament, laying all the blame for the ongoing war on Armenia. The outbreak of the hostilities marked the beginning of a true hunt for the Armenians living in Georgia: thousands of them were declared war prisoners and exiled to Kutayis.⁹⁰

On December 19, S. Tigranian cabled Georgia's Foreign Minister, informing him about the possibility of halting military operations and starting negotiations having Captain Green as a mediator, with the only condition (this was based on a decision adopted by the Armenian National Assembly) that Georgia secure the safety of the Armenians in Borchalu and Akhalkalak. The radio-telegram also pointed out that the Armenian units had not engaged in fighting against the Georgian troops until December 13, whereas the Georgians, with their violence against the Armenian inhabitants of the aforementioned districts, had

forced Armenia to resort to arms to protect the rights of these people. The document said, "In the last several months, the Armenian Government has manifested its will and readiness to settle the issue through peaceful means. In contrast to this, its Georgian counterpart has conducted an aggressive policy of occupation by making claims to Lori, annexing Akhalkalak, and committing violence against Borchalu's Armenian population. Meanwhile, the Armenian side submitted numerous diplomatic protests and made many peaceful suggestions which were completely ignored by Georgia."⁹¹

In Gharakilisa on December 15, Captain Green, who was acting as a mediator in the Armeno-Georgian conflict, presented his own terms of a proposed armistice. They included the cessation of hostilities for two weeks, the immediate return of the refugees of Akhalkalak to their settlements, and the urgent removal of Georgian troops from Akhalkalak District and Borchalu up to Khram, on condition that the Armenian forces should not penetrate into those territories.⁹² Evidently, the aforementioned conditions were fair and met the interests of the Armenian people. The point was that the English, who had displayed a pro-Georgian demeanor during the entire Armeno-Georgian conflict, changed their position in favor of the Armenians in mid-December. Through this, they pursued the aim of involving the militarily successful Armenians in the negotiations. It was only after the talks had begun that the English High Command revealed their true intentions.

The English failed to stop the military operations of December 15 to 20. The fighting continued: the Armenian troops won a number of serious victories in Lori and reached Shulaver.

The representatives of the Entente continued their efforts to achieve a peaceful solution. However, in their mediating approaches the English were not guided by principles of justice. On December 25, English General W. H. Rycroft and French Colonel Chardini, without consulting the representative of Armenia, signed a secret agreement with Georgia's Prime Minister Zhordania on methods of solving the conflict. It foresaw the cessation of hostilities; the stationing of Georgian troops in the terri-

tory north of the line of Jalaloghli-Dsegh, and Armenian forces south of the same line; the establishment of a Georgian system of governance in Akhalkalak (with representatives of the local Armenians and Muslims)⁹³ under the control of the Allied Powers, as well as high restriction of the number of Georgian troops in the district.

Arshak Jamalian, who was to sign the document as a representative of Armenia, flatly refused to do so, arguing about the part concerning Akhalkalak. The English added the following sentence at the bottom of the agreement, "Mr. Jamalian is against the provision stipulating that Georgia occupy Akhalkalak." In fact, the Allies attempted to put the one-sided agreement into effect without reckoning with the opinion of the Armenian side. Armenia had no other alternative but to become reconciled to the given situation. Meeting the Englishmen's expostulations, on December 29, Armenia's representative M. Harutiunian signed the aforementioned agreement in Metz Gharakilisa, with the proviso that the terms stipulated by the armistice be temporary and subject to further consideration. The truce document was evidently unilateral, being subservient to only the Georgians' interests, this being also attested by Douglas Vidzers, President of the Committee of the Allied Powers in Gharakilisa. According to this high-ranking official, the Armenian side's discontent with the agreement was quite justified, but even under those circumstances, "the Armenian Government manifested profound generosity and sincere striving for peace" by signing it.⁹⁴

The Armeno-Georgian armed conflict was terminated on December 31, and a Peace Conference was held in Tiflis from January 9 till 19, 1919. The fact that the meeting of the parties was to take place in the Georgian capital and not somewhere neutral gave the Georgian delegation a domineering position. Probably, the Englishmen chairing the meeting had previously supported the Georgians' suggestion that it be held in that city, for they had shown inclination to defend Georgia's interests both in late December and in the days of the Conference. Taking into account the fact that the Armenian National Council in Tiflis could represent the interests of the Armenian people, the Armenian Government

did not mind the Georgian-English suggestion concerning the place of the Conference. As the subsequent events proved, however, this fact played a pivotal role for the adoption of decisions unfavourable for Armenia.

The Peace Conference was chaired by Stuart, a colonel in the British Army. Captain Hasseld represented the French High Command. The Armenian delegation comprised M. Harutiunian (Head), A. A. Aharonian (Acting Secretary), St. Mamikonian and others, its military advisor being General G. Korganov (Korganian). Georgia's delegation was more representative: headed by Foreign Minister Ye. Gegechkori, it included Sabakhtarashvili, General Gedevanov, and others.

The problem of Akhalkalak, that was one of the toughest issues of the Conference, was discussed at its January 13 session.⁹⁵ Colonel Stuart displayed a biased attitude from the very beginning and acted in accordance with a scenario previously coordinated with the Georgians. He suggested that Georgia's proposal for settling the dispute be considered first. The Armenians had already rejected that proposal during the previous meeting of the Armeno-Georgian delegations. The main problem concerned the stationing of troops in Akhalkalak. The Georgians suggested that only their troops be stationed in Javakhk: a 200-member detachment was to patrol the border of the district, and a 360-soldier battalion with 4 artillery guns and the same number of machine guns was to be stationed in Akhalkalak City. Ridiculous as it is, General Gedevanov "substantiated" the presence of the Georgian army units in the district by his "concern" for the safety of the local Armenians. The Georgian army was to prevent bloodshed between the returning Armenian refugees and the Muslims who had settled in the former's settlements. As for the security of the Armenian population, the Georgian general assured that there was nothing to worry about, for "the snow covering Akhalkalak District renders any hostilities absolutely impossible so that the troops cannot be used against Armenia."⁹⁶

The British did not accept the objections of the Armenian side. Stuart suggested deploying a company of Allied Forces to the district. It soon appeared, though, that this suggestion, which was more or less acceptable

to the Armenians, was not possible to implement; the Allied troops would not be able to arrive in the region immediately. Stuart accepted the Georgians' proposal to deploy an 800-soldier unit to Akhalkalak. In response to that, Korganov suggested that the Armenians be permitted to keep 600 soldiers in South Borchalu to counterbalance the outnumbering Georgian forces. His efforts, however, proved futile; all of this was a diplomatic ploy by the Georgians and the British, who had already planned everything.

Under Stuart's pressure, the Armenian delegation accepted the Georgian plan, which privileged the Georgians to keep a considerable number of troops in Javakhk and banned the Armenians from participating in the district's affairs without the presence and control of the Allied Forces. Moreover, at Gedevanov's demand, a special provision was added stipulating that any aggression on the part of Armenia against Georgia would be regarded as a hostile action against the Allies themselves.⁹⁷

The Conference also made a decision about the principles of the system of governance of Akhalkalak. It did not accept Armenia's suggestion of electing bodies. Stuart dodged the just questions of the Armenians, and based his argument on the "principle" that the issue was beyond the jurisdiction of the Conference, since it had already been settled by the truce agreement proposed by General Rycroft and signed in late December. The Armenian delegation did not even succeed in persuading the participants of the Conference to accept their suggestion that the candidacy of the Armenian members of the Committee to be established to supervise the activity of the Georgian officials be nominated by Armenia and approved by the Allies. This issue, too, was placed under Georgia's jurisdiction: the "control" of the activities of the Georgian officials was to be entrusted upon the representatives of the local Armenians and Muslims elected for this purpose (the Allied observers were to follow their work). However, neither the Allied troops nor their observers arrived there; thus, the Georgian Government established complete sovereignty in the district. As for the Supervising Committee, the election of the representatives of the local Armenians and Muslims became a formality, and their

appointment actually turned into a monopoly of the Georgian authorities.

Thus, the British delegation assumed such a course for the discussions of the problem of Akhalkalak that at the end, the decisions adopted were acceptable only for the Georgians. To the rightful objections of the Armenian side as to how the Armenians could be stripped of their rights to participate in the administrative-political life of a district that was predominantly Armenian-inhabited, Colonel Stuart answered in a demagogic manner that it would be carried out by the Allied troops and their observers.

The biased demeanor of the British delegation filled the Georgians with great enthusiasm. Foreign Minister of Georgia Ye. Gegechkori stated confidently, "Armenia should have absolutely nothing to do with this system of governance (Akhalkalak - A. M.)." He did not even agree with Stuart's suggestion that Georgia should inform the Armenian Government about the elections of the Supervising Committee. The stern and insulting demeanor of the Georgians towards the Allies and Armenians was considered sufficient by the Colonel himself, who, without reckoning with the protests of the Armenians, declared the issue closed.⁹⁸

It should be pointed out that the insolent demeanor of the Georgian delegation at the Conference was not only conditioned by the pro-Georgian position of the British delegates, but also by the close ties that had been established between Georgia and Azerbaijan during the Armeno-Georgian conflict. As academician G. Galoyan correctly pointed out, cementing their friendship, the Mensheviks and Musavatists soon signed a Georgian-Azerbaijani agreement, one of the secret provisions of which stipulated that if an Armeno-Azerbaijani war broke out, Georgia should impose a blockade on the entire system of communication of Armenia.⁹⁹

The Peace Conference closed on January 17, the treaty signed being highly favorable for the Georgian side. The military progress of the Armenian troops was nullified: more than 40 Lori villages, most of them Armenian-inhabited, were to be included in the Neutral Zone,¹⁰⁰ while

Javakhk, still considered a disputed territory, was to remain under Georgian control.¹⁰¹ The Georgian Government allowed the Armenians to keep not more than 225 infantry soldiers (2 companies with 2 machine-guns) in the district. As mentioned earlier, the supervision of the Georgian officials' work was entrusted to the representatives of the Entente, who were to carry it out with the support of the local Armenian and Muslim inhabitants.¹⁰² We also find it necessary to point out that the northern frontier of the Neutral Zone was to extend up to the line where the Georgian troops had been on December 31, the last day of the war, whereas all those territories that were under Armenian control were to be cleared of the Armenian army units.

The British High Command did not confine itself to the aforementioned. In the following months, it made other anti-Armenian and pro-Georgian "suggestions"; instead of restoring the once-friendly relations of these peoples, it drove a wedge between the two neighbors. Let us not forget that in the Karabakh Conflict, the British defended Azerbaijan's interests as well, lulling the Armenians with unreal promises of the settlement of the Armenian Question.

Anyway, the Armeno-Georgian war came to an end, the tension between the two nations gradually abated, and soon the countries entered into tolerable inter-state relations. In March both republics recognized each other's independence, and the railway connecting them was restored, thanks to which their economic ties grew closer. Georgia, however, taking advantage of its geographical position, from time to time took anti-Armenian steps, such as imposing an economic blockade and looting the foreign relief intended for the famine-stricken Armenians.¹⁰³ Thus, in April and early May of 1919, when General Andranik was in Tiflis, the railway did not function regularly and safely. At a meeting with Georgia's Foreign Minister Ye. Gegechkori (Poet Hovhannes Tumanian was present there, too), General Andranik advised the Georgian Government to abstain from blockading Armenia, for it was against the interests of both peoples. He said, "...Thousands of our orphans are dying of starvation. What are they guilty of? You have blocked the road to

Batum and thus prevent flour from reaching Armenia.”¹⁰⁴ The General’s mediation had a positive influence in the re-opening of the railroad of Batum-Tiflis-Yerevan.

Fortunately, after the armed conflict, both the Armenian and Georgian political circles adopted a policy of settling their conflicts only through political means, an approach to which the sides remained loyal even in most complicated situations. Interestingly, although a number of issues were never settled, the two peoples maintained their friendship. Even with the most disputable territorial issues, the republics agreed to settle them only in a civilized manner, i.e. through negotiations.

Dissatisfied with the British settlement of the Armeno-Georgian conflict at the January 1919 Conference, the Armenian side tried to raise the issue at international bodies, such as the Conference of the Second International, held in Bern in February 1919, and the Peace Summit of Paris. In Bern the Georgian Social-Democratic Mensheviks, led by A. Chkhenkeli, accepted the suggestion of Hay Heghapokhakan Dashnaktsutun (Armenian Revolutionary Federation) that the Armeno-Georgian territorial dispute be included in the agenda of the Conference. The majority of the parties proposed that the principle of territorial ownership be based on national self-determination: this was to be implemented by a general referendum.¹⁰⁵ Undoubtedly, the issues of Akhalkalak and the Armenian part of Lori would be settled in favor of Armenia. Most likely, in Bern the Georgian Mensheviks “accepted” the idea of a referendum for the sake of gaining time and retaining solidarity with Europe’s Socialist parties. The Georgians had already gained certain control over the region after the British had declared Lori a Neutral Zone. Furthermore, Javakhk was to remain under their control for the time being.

It is by no means accidental that the Georgian Mensheviks did not sustain the idea of a referendum at the further conferences. In the spring of 1919, when the Armeno-Georgian Frontier Peace-Keeping Committee started working, the Georgians flatly refused to hold a referendum, thus assuming a particularly unyielding position on the issue of Akhalkalak.

Taking advantage of the support of General W. Thomson, the Commander of the British army in Transcaucasia, the Georgian Government strove to have the resolution of the January Conference accepted as the basis for any actions. Incited by the Georgians, General Thomson proposed a provisional settlement for the border disputes in Tiflis on April 14, 1919. He called upon the Georgian Prime Minister and Armenia's diplomatic representative in Tiflis to agree to his plan immediately "for the sake of both peoples." It suggested that Akhalkalak District be under the jurisdiction of the Georgian Government, and most of Borchalu District (including Alaverdi City) and part of Ardahan District (the entire territory along the left bank of the Kur, together with Ardahan City) be delivered to Georgia.¹⁰⁶ It is remarkable to note that the proposal of the Head of the British military mission, hardly different from that of his predecessor Colonel Stuart, was not subject to discussion. It placed Armenia and Georgia in an unbalanced situation.

First, again the Georgian capital was chosen to host the discussion of the issue; second, the interests of the Georgian side were to be defended by their Prime Minister, while those of Armenia by its diplomatic representative in Georgia. By choosing a diplomatic representative ranking so inferior to the Prime Minister, and that for the settlement of such a serious problem, the British General made it clear that he did not care about violating even diplomatic etiquette and specifically stood firm in the defence of Georgia's interests. The Armenian authorities did not respond to Thomson's decision, whereas the Georgians commenced gradually putting it into effect, attempting to settle the issue in their favor in the international European parties as well.

Taking advantage of the absence of the representatives of Hay Heghaphokhakan Dashnaksutiun from the conference of the Socialist parties held in Amsterdam in the spring of 1919, the Georgian Mensheviks declared that they did not have any territorial disputes with the Armenians. In response to that, famous political figure Michael Varandian, Armenia's diplomatic representative in Italy, informed the Executive Body of the Second International on behalf of Dashnaksutiun

that the Georgians' declaration was far from reality; in fact, by making such a statement, Georgia's representatives denounced the decision of the Bern Conference.

Early in May of 1919, the Executive Body of the Second International readdressed the Armeno-Georgian territorial disputes. Convinced that they would again be forced to accept the principle of a referendum, which was favorable to the Armenians, the Georgians put forward a new principle¹⁰⁷ which proposed to settle issues through a court of arbitration; thus, they expected to postpone the discussions and maintain the status quo. To remove the discussion of the principle of the peoples' right to self-determination from the agenda, Tzereteli, one of the most influential Georgian Mensheviks, asked the Armenians if they were "ready to apply the same principle to Turkish Armenia."¹⁰⁸ Naturally, the application of the principle of a referendum in Western Armenia, where a genocide had been perpetrated against the Armenian people, could not yield a desirable result for the Armenians: the Georgian politician was merely abusing the historical tragedy of the Armenian people. Moreover, the Georgians proposed to resettle Akhalkalak Armenians in Western Armenia and the Marz of Kars, which had been part of the Republic of Armenia since May 1919. Thus, the problem of Javakhk would be "settled," and the main reason for the Armeno-Georgian conflict would be "abolished."

In Paris on May 16, 1919, British diplomat Louis Mallet presented his Government's approaches concerning the territorial disputes in Transcaucasia to Avetis Aharonian, the head of the Armenian delegation. In response to the latter's question why the English were supporting Azerbaijan and Georgia in the problems of the Armenian-populated lands of Karabakh, Lori, and Akhalkalak, which were vital territories for Armenia, the English statesman answered that the Armenians would be given Western Armenia in compensation for that.¹⁰⁹

Seeing that no help could be expected of the European countries, Armenia reverted to the Second International, whose Executive Body rejected Georgia's proposal and reaffirmed the decisions of Bern Conference, reiterating that the referendum was the only just principle for

solving the conflict. It decided to send a special delegation to the region. The Dashnaks also proposed that the Georgian troops be pulled out of those districts to prevent any pressure or violence exerted against the local population. The Georgian side, however, rejected that, and the issue again reached a stalemate. Even in the face of such a stern stand, on July 19, 1919, the Government of Armenia decided that the only way to settle the controversy was through diplomatic means. Armenia's Foreign Minister was charged with resuming talks with the Georgian Government: the results of these negotiations were to be discussed at the August 1 session of the Armenian National Assembly.¹¹⁰ In the following months, however, all the endeavors of the Armenian side to settle the problem in accordance with the ethnographic principle as well as other international norms and approaches, giving priority to peoples' right to self-determination and the holding of a referendum proved absolutely futile, both during the Armeno-Georgian negotiations and the conferences held with the mediation of the Second International.

The Situation in Akhalkalak District Between 1919 and 1920

By March 1919, the last remnants of Akhalkalak refugees had returned to their native district, which they found totally plundered, with part of the wheat and cattle having been taken to Turkey. The villages of Turkish-speaking Armenian Catholics and Russian Dukhobors were in relatively better conditions. The latter rendered tangible aid to the refugees in the planting of crops and restoration of their houses. Akhaltskha Armenians helped their compatriots, too: hundreds of deportees, particularly orphans, were moved to Akhaltskha City and the villages of the district.

The Armenian Government decided to allocate part of the wheat received from abroad to the refugees of Akhalkalak. Having lifted the blockade on the roads in the spring of 1919, Georgia, which had inherited some locomotives and carriages after the collapse of the Russian Empire and Transcaucasian Sevm, refused to share them with Armenia.

Denouncing the Georgian Government's policy, Armenian writer Aksel Bakunts regretfully wrote the following in the "Hayastani Ashkhatavor" newspaper: "Hundreds, even thousands of people, including Akhalkalak Armenians, die of famine and different diseases every day. With profound indifference, Georgia witnesses their deaths and still remains unwilling to allocate some ten or twenty of the thousands of carriages and locomotives it has at its disposal for the Armenian people to receive their bread and escape starvation."¹¹¹

It was only in June that the Armenian Government managed to purchase some carriages, paying a considerable sum of money; at last the republic received wheat, which was delivered to the famine-stricken Akhalkalak Armenians via Alexandropol or directly from Tiflis, with the Armenian authorities covering all the expenses.

The allocation of wheat to Akhalkalak District was carried out on a state level. Armenia's diplomatic mission to Tiflis created a special post of trusteeship which was led by D. Davidkhanian. Early in May 1919, the Armenian Government allotted 74 million rubles, in addition to a subsistence allowance of 3 million rubles, to the district to buy seeds.¹¹² Nevertheless, all these measures were merely a drop in the huge ocean of need so that the economic conditions of Javakhk did not get any better. The refugees who had failed to prepare for the winter of 1919 to 1920 experienced unspeakable deprivations due to the lack of fuel and food. On March 9, 1920, the Armenian National Council of Tiflis, the Armenian Agricultural Society, and the Board of Akhalkalak Armenians convened a joint session which charged Poghos Abelian with "...going to Yerevan and interceding with the Armenian Government, Parliament as well as other institutions and people for allocating some more flour and money to Akhalkalak's inhabitants."¹¹³ Overcoming the economic obstacles posed by Georgia, in late March 1920, the Armenian authorities sent some more wheat to Akhalkalak. In response to that, the Georgian authorities set heavy taxes on wheat imported to Armenia and later sent to Akhalkalak, being well-aware that it was being distributed to the Georgian refugees as well.

With the number of draft animals having drastically diminished, Akhalkalak Armenians were completely unable to arrange crop-planting; in addition, they were badly in need of seeds. "If relief is not received immediately, the Armenian villages of Akhalkalak will turn into graveyards for their famine-stricken inhabitants," Akhalkalak people wrote to the "Zang" newspaper.¹¹⁴

The severe frost that befell the district in late 1918 hindered the Turks from taking all the cattle and belongings with them. Poghos Abelian applied to Akhalkalak's Governor General Makayev with a request to hand them to the refugees, but the latter did not agree. Unfortunately, the National Council of Georgian Armenians, which had ceased working altogether since the Armeno-Georgian war, did not support Abelian and other patriots in their endeavors to somehow alleviate the refugees' conditions.

Governor General Makayev disarmed Akhalkalak's Armenians and established a severe regime in the district with the help of the Georgian militia brought from Imeret and Tiflis. The Georgians and Meskhetian Turks, however, were not stripped of the right to bear arms. In contrast to this, permit to carry arms was granted to only those Armenians who had allegedly "volunteered," but in fact, had been forcibly recruited into the Georgian army to fight against the mutineers of Abkhazia, Ossetia, and Adzharia. "For a long time Menshevik Georgia disarmed Akhalkalak's Armenians, handing their arms to the district's Turks and Georgians instead," wrote Poghos Abelian.¹¹⁵

After the Armeno-Georgian war, in February, the Turkish inhabitants of Koblian and Potskhov rebelled against Georgia's Menshevik Government, probably, instigated by Turkey and the High Command in Transcaucasia. The Turks invaded Akhaltskha via Khulo. The Georgian frontier guards and the garrison of Akhaltskha gave up the city and its vicinity without any resistance. They plundered and ruined the Armenian village of Jajarak before their escape. The district remained under Turkish control for 19 days; the Turkish aggressors, led by Server Bey, "declared" it an autonomous republic independent of Georgia. After the suppression of the revolt (the authorities attempted to involve the Armenians in their

actions against the mutineers), absolutely no punishment was administered to its instigators, Bakhshi and Zia Beys, as well as other influential figures. Moreover, they were appointed to different posts and granted military ranks. The same "benevolence," however, was not bestowed upon the Armenians. In order to subjugate Adzharia's Muslims, who had benefited from de facto independence, the Georgian authorities enlisted a considerable number of Armenians in the army; all those refusing to obey were severely punished. A group of Armenian deserters from Akhaltskha were even shot.¹¹⁶ The Georgian militia and the members of the National Guards, headed by S. Nadiradze, who was known for his flagrant hatred for the Armenians, often entered some Armenian settlements, where they illegally collected taxes, confiscated wheat and other agricultural products and cattle, also demanding uniforms for the Georgian army. Sometimes armed conflicts burst out between the peasantry and the unruly militia. Early in March, a tragic incident occurred in Korkh Village: while the villagers were trying to prevent the militia from looting, the latter opened fire and two peaceful inhabitants fell victim to their bullets.¹¹⁷ The contemporary press writes, "During the Georgian rule, piñage grew into widespread gangsterism. The separate cases of robbery grew into large-scale plunder. Entire villages suffer the bandits' attacks, with rapes and kidnapping reported everywhere. ...Despite the repeated complaints... to put an end to that brigandage, the Government does not take any actions to prevent it; nobody is paying compensation for what they have done."¹¹⁸ The Armenians in neighboring Akhaltskha were in the same situation. An eyewitness named Ye. Simonian writes with bitter pain that "...the Georgian Mensheviks, who had succeeded the Turks, did not prove any better: the district again suffered a heavy predicament, anarchy, tumult, devastation, and outrages. ... Bribery, national discrimination, beating, robbery, and murders had permeated through the entire region."¹¹⁹

On February 3, 1919, when the famine-stricken refugees were still in utter poverty and suffered severe cold, the Georgian authorities hastily "organized" the elections of the Villagers' Conference, which was somewhat akin to a local body of government. The majority of the Armenian

population did not participate in the elections, which were accompanied by flagrant blackmail as well as heavy political and ideological pressure exerted by the Georgian Social Democrats. It is by no means accidental that the Georgians, who were an absolute minority, won 5 seats, while each of the Armenians, Turks, and Russian Dukhobors, who enjoyed a majority, received only a single representative in the district.¹²⁰ The elections of the Constitutional Assembly of Georgia, held in the summer of 1920, were marked by even greater falsifications.¹²¹

The Georgian Government started the "colonization" of Javakhk: by late 1920, several hundreds of resettlers from Imeret had moved to Akhalkalak District under the auspices of the Georgian state.¹²² The local Georgians' Union seized a considerable part of the district's northern and eastern pastures from the Armenians and offered them to the Tushes. In the aftermath of various intrigues, a number of villages were deprived of their arable lands, the Georgians also putting forth claims to the lands in Kartzakh, Dadesh, Sulda, and other villages belonging to Akhaltskha's Sourb Prkich (Holy Saviour) Church. Georgia did not even refrain from turning to such means as the assimilation of the Armenians: a special campaign was launched to "Georgianize" the Catholic Armenians.¹²³

The Georgian authorities were particularly cruel in their attitude towards the ethnic minorities represented by the Armenians, Ossetians, and Abkhazians, who were charged with separatism.¹²⁴ Apart from the evident military and political "actions" in the struggle against separatism, the authorities also started conducting a policy of cultural discrimination. Thus, the Armenians, constituting one fifth of the population of the Republic of Georgia, were stripped of any possibility to arrange their educational and cultural life, a right they had fully enjoyed under Tsarism. Absolutely ignored by the state, a considerable part of Akhalkalak's schools, especially, those with a mixed, i.e. Armenian and Georgian contingent were closed. Most of them did not resume their activity even after the return of the refugees. In contrast to this, the Georgian state did its utmost to assist similar institutions in the Georgian villages. All the endeavors of the Armenian National Council to allocate

the foreign credit intended for the schools to the Armenian institutions proved absolutely futile. "The Georgian Armenians could not put up with this injustice easily, for on the one hand they saw how munificent the Georgian Government was towards the cultural and educational institutions in the Georgian-inhabited localities; on the other hand, they realized that a substantial part of the state and community revenue was wrung from the Armenians," wrote the "Hayrenik" magazine.¹²⁵

The Georgian Government's decision that all official and state documents should be written only in Georgian posed serious difficulties for the Armenian population in Akhalkalak and Akhaltskha. Indeed, they had absolutely no command of that language so that it was practically impossible to put that decision into effect in these districts. Under such circumstances, in mid-1919 large groups of Armenians from both Akhalkalak and other densely-populated Armenian localities under Georgian control started moving to Armenia.¹²⁶ It goes without saying that the chauvinistic policy the Georgian Mensheviks implemented in Javakhk could not remain unnoticed by the Armenian Government. "...The very Georgian sources have informed us... to what ruthless persecutions the Georgian authorities subject the Armenians in these districts (Borchalu and Akhalkalak - A. M.)," writes A. Jamalian.¹²⁷ Despite all this, however, in 1919 the Armenian Government, with whatever considerations, confined itself to sharing Armenia's wheat with Akhalkalak and postponing the settlement of the border disputes with Georgia up until the Summit of Paris, which they expected would finally yield the desirable results. In that regard, Ruben Ter-Minassian writes, "Georgia's attitude towards Armenia was highly unfair, since that country had unjustly taken possession of Akhalkalak, a purely Armenian-populated district, which formed an integral part of Armenia both from geographical and ethnographic standpoints. Georgia's claims to Lori were absolutely groundless, too... Despite this injustice, the Bureau (the highest ruling body of Dashnaktsutun - H. M.) was still of the opinion that we should be patient and make concessions to the Georgians as much as possible."¹²⁸

We see the same yielding approach with Alexander Khatissian, the Prime Minister of Armenia, who, in a letter addressed to Avetis Aharonian, the head of the Armenian delegation, in February 1919, expressed the thought that Armenia was aiming for a yielding policy taking into account the cordial neighborly relations it had always had with Georgia: "...Almost everybody has reconciled to the thought that Akhalkalak District is to be ceded to them (the Georgians - A. M.). As for Borchalu, the boundary is marked by the line of Lalvar-Ayrum."¹²⁹ The Armenian authorities, however, should have realized that the more the Armenian side made concessions, the firmer the Georgians' claims to Lori and Akhalkalak became. Undoubtedly, it was absolutely wrong to assume that since Paris Conference was going to unite Western Armenia with Armenia, there was no sense in worsening the relations with the neighboring countries of Georgia and Azerbaijan because of the disputed territories. This position gradually gained ground in the Armenian political circles.

Disappointed by the "timid" demeanor of the Armenian Government, in the spring and summer of 1919, Akhalkalak Armenians addressed numerous petitions to the English High Command in Georgia, asking them to mediate and put an end to the outrageous acts of the Georgian authorities perpetrated against the Armenians, and to include Armenian representatives in the district's police and bodies of governance in accordance with the ethnic make-up of the local population. Beginning with July and August, under the pressure of the English Mission, which had committed itself to acting as a mediator in the Armeno-Georgian conflict since January, the number of the Armenians, Turks, and Russians increased to some extent in Akhalkalak's bodies of government. Nevertheless, the Georgians retained the main political leverage in their hands; moreover, after the departure of the English in late 1919, most of the representatives of the ethnic minorities were dismissed from their work in the governing bodies of both Akhalkalak and other districts.

At the Armeno-Georgian Conference held in Tiflis on August 29 and 30, 1919, N. Ramishvili, the head of the Georgian delegation, declared that Georgia was categorically opposed to the unification of Akhalkalak

District and the northern part of Lori with Armenia. The Georgian side would make "concessions" only with regard to the Armenian part of Borchalu, agreeing to leave it under Armenian control temporarily, until the settlement of the Armenian Question and the unification of Western Armenia with the Armenian Republic.

On September 17, 1919, another Armeno-Georgian Conference opened in Tiflis, with N. Ramishvili and S. Mdivany representing Georgia, and Stepan Mamikonian and S. Khachatryan representing Armenia. Probably, fearing another possible Armeno-Georgian conflict because of the upcoming withdrawal of the English troops from the Neutral Zone of Lori, the Georgians offered a "concessive" way to settle the problem. It envisaged that Lori Plain (Jalaloghli-Vorontsovka) and the territories south of Akori Village be yielded to Armenia, while Georgia would retain control over Akhalkalak District and the lands north of the aforementioned settlement. Moreover, the Georgians regarded that "concession" as a provisional settlement of the issue before the Paris Summit decided to return the Western Armenian districts to Armenia.

The Armenian delegation declared that the Armenian Government was ready to cede Khram (Tzalka) District as well as the northern and central parts of Akhalkalak District to Georgia. The south of Javakhk with its lakes, including the villages of Heshtia, Satkha, Hokam, and Azmana, was to remain under Armenian control, the entire territory extending up to the river Kur. As for the Armeno-Georgian frontier in Lori, the Armenians suggested that it run along the border of Lalvar, north of Koghb. Although none of the sides accepted the other's proposals and they did not reach any written agreement, Georgia consented to grant Armenia the privileges of transit trade, telegraph circuit, etc., given the fact that the Armenian authorities had manifested willingness to cede most of Akhalkalak and all of Tzalka. It is remarkable to note that Georgia perceived the Armenians' "willingness to make concessions" as a concession entitling itself to exercise full power in Javakhk. In this respect, Ruben writes, "The Georgians took advantage of our poor situation and abused their geographical position, trampling upon our people's dignity and violating our vital

rights.”¹³⁰ The status quo was extremely favourable for the Georgians; once the English left the region, not only Javakhk but also the Neutral Zone of Lori came under their power.

On November 3, 1919, the representatives of both sides met in Tiflis to sign an agreement which was suggested by Georgia, stipulating that they should settle all their disputes through exclusively peaceful means, or neutral arbitration.¹³¹ That document fortified the Georgian regime in the aforementioned districts and stripped Armenia of the right to adopt a tough position on the issue, “relying” only on the negotiations which did not promise any prospects. Therefore, it is by no means accidental that Stepan Mamikonian and S. Khachatryan, who stayed in Tiflis to continue the talks, did not achieve any results, being occupied with only, as the saying goes, trading nonsense with the Georgians. It was only in late 1919 that the Armenian Government became firmly convinced that no concessions could be expected of Georgia with regard to the issue of the disputed territories, and decided to include it in the agenda of the Summit of Paris.¹³²

On April 13, 1920, the Armenian (headed by Aharonian), Georgian (headed by Chkheidze), and Tartar (Azerbaijani, headed by Topchibashev) delegations, that had gathered in Paris at the invitation of Lord Curzon’s secretary Vansittart, started considering the issue of the disputed territories in Transcaucasia. The meeting of April 21 discussed the question of granting Armenia control over Lazistan in the Chorokh basin as a corridor to the Black Sea, but the Georgians opposed that. Chkheidze declared it unacceptable to adopt such a resolution without taking into account the opinion of the Laz, i.e. he emphasized the necessity of respecting peoples’ right to self-determination. Aharonian did not hesitate to remind him that it was a long time since the Georgians consigned to oblivion that right, which was the most democratic principle of border determination. “Why did you suddenly remember it in connection with the Laz? Why did you not ever mention it while demanding Akhalkalak, where you can hardly find 4,000 to 5,000 Georgians among the 80,000 Armenians, or Lori and Borchalu, where the Armenians

amount to 60,000, and the Georgians to only 400 to 500?"¹³³ Thus, the Summit reached a deadlock, for which Lord Curzon expressed his discontent to the Transcaucasian delegations.

On May 7, 1920, Russia and Georgia signed an agreement containing a provision (forcibly included at the Georgians' insistence) that the former should recognize the latter's rights to Lori, Akhalkalak, and Zakatala. In response to that, Armenian Prime Minister Hamo Ohanjanian sent telegrams of protest to the Governments of Georgia and the Soviet Socialist Federal Republic of Russia, stating that by considering Lori and Akhalkalak parts of Georgia, the Georgian authorities had broken the Armeno-Georgian agreements of 1919, which regarded these territories as disputed.¹³⁴ Evidently, however, it was only outwardly that Georgia found these areas disputed, while in fact, it acted according to its own preference.

On July 5, 1920, Armenia adopted a law granting citizenship to the Armenians living outside the borders of the Republic of Armenia. It gave rise to discontent, or better to say, certain demagogic manoeuvres on the part of the Georgians at the next Armeno-Georgian Conference held between July and August. Finding that law absolutely unacceptable, they declared that in case the Georgian Armenians followed it, they would have to move to Armenia. Moreover, the Georgian side demanded that the Armenians yield Lori up to Sanahin Station, the entire district of Akhalkalak, including the area of the lakes, as well as most of Olti and Ardahan Districts, but the Armenians rejected it.

Unable to arrive at a negotiated settlement of the dispute, the sides applied to the Entente, basing their decision to do so on the Treaty of Sevres signed on August 10, 1920. Clause 72 of this treaty stipulated that border disputes between the Transcaucasian countries should be settled through a committee representing both sides. In case it proved unable to carry out its mission, the issue would go to the jurisdiction of the Allied Powers.¹³⁵ It is remarkable to note that the talks between the two states continued even after the question had been included in the agenda of the Summit of Paris. Moreover, they did not stop even in the days of the

Armeno-Turkish war that began in late September 1920. On October 25, T. Bekzadian's delegation met Ramishvili, Sabakhtashvili and Mdivany in Tiflis. Faced with the defeat the Armenian troops had suffered at the front, the Armenian Government now prioritized the issue of establishing a united anti-Turkish front in alliance with the Georgians. In fact, the Georgian Government, which had declared itself neutral, had cooperated with Kemal's Government.¹³⁶ Georgia tried to take advantage of Armenia's unfavorable military and political situation, and pursue concessions regarding the disputed territories. When Armenia suggested that the two neighboring countries should unite their forces against the Turks, Mdivany declared that Georgia could not take up arms against Turkey and Russia for the sake of Armenia. Ramishvili advised that the Armenians should confine themselves to the Georgians' moral support and consent to mobilize the Armenians living in Georgia.¹³⁷

It should be noted that the aforementioned permission was an establishment of a fact rather than a manifestation of good will. The point is that the Georgian Armenians, especially, the inhabitants of Javakhk, had begun conscription on their own initiative since October, taking an active part in the war.¹³⁸ They also rendered tangible material aid to the Armenian army by conveying a great amount of food, particularly, wheat loaded on carts, to the warriors stationed in Ardahan and Alexandropol. The transportation of relief ceased only in early November, when the Turkish army occupied Alexandropol and Aghbaba's Turk-Tartars rose in rebellion against the authorities, establishing control over the road of Akhalkalak-Shirak.

Finding itself in complete military, political, and diplomatic isolation, Armenia was obliged to yield to the Georgians' pressure. On November 13, the representatives of the Republic of Armenia and the Democratic Republic of Georgia met in Tiflis to sign an agreement in compliance with which the former gave its consent to the latter's suggestion that Georgian troops be provisionally (for three months) stationed in the Neutral Zone of Lori to prevent Kemal's army's penetration into Borchalu District.¹³⁹ The second provision of the agreement stated that

“The stationing of the Georgian troops in the Neutral Zone was not to bring forth any new rights to that territory (naturally for the Georgians - A.M.).”¹⁴⁰ The Georgian Government, however, did not confine itself to only Lori, as its army units penetrated into Ardahan District, north of Kars Region; the document had not stipulated anything concerning that. As for the other disputed territories, namely the districts of Ardvin and Akhalkalak, their problem remained unsettled, for they were soon occupied by the Turks.¹⁴¹

Entering Lori, the Georgians forgot their promises and started perpetrating violence against the local Armenian population. In that respect, the Government of the Republic of Armenia and later the Armenian Revolutionary Committee, which succeeded it in December, addressed telegrams of protest to Georgia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but they remained without any answer.¹⁴² It is remarkable to note that the aforementioned Committee, which held the reins of government in Soviet Armenia in late 1920 and early in 1921, declared the Armeno-Georgian agreements of January 1919 and November 13, 1920 invalid,¹⁴³ taking active steps to introduce the Soviet regime into Lori and unite it with the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic.

On the eve of its fall, the Democratic Republic of Georgia attempted to “settle” the issue of Javakhk with the Turks in its own peculiar manner. Strange as it may sound, the Georgian political figures regarded the entire Armenian nation, including the inhabitants of Javakhk, as accomplices of the Russian Bolsheviks and enemies of Georgian statehood. Probably, it was this very opinion that motivated their anti-Armenian alliance with the Turks.

In late February and early March of 1921, another calamity befell Akhalkalak District: it was attacked by Turkey. By invading Javakhk, the Turks actually broke their secret agreement with the Georgians according to which they had committed themselves to keeping Georgia’s territories - Akhalkalak was considered as such at that time - out of the line of their incursions. The point is that in the last days of its existence, the Government of independent Georgia, guided by political considerations,

had first disarmed the local Armenians and then granted the Turks permission to penetrate into the district.¹⁴⁴ Some of the contemporary documents give an eloquent picture of Georgia's policy on Javakhk. Thus, a group of intellectuals from Javakhk addressed a letter to Armenia's representative in Tiflis, in which they particularly wrote, "Every time our district came under Georgian control, they easily took possession of it, showing rather a tough attitude towards us. However, as soon as the Turks appeared, they yielded it up to them and abandoned us..."¹⁴⁵

In late February, Doctor Nikoradze and Ramishvili (probably, a relative of famous Noy Ramishvili), the Menshevik Government's representatives in Javakhk, personally told Kemal's High Command about their decision to leave the district and put it under Turkish control. In order to dispel any doubts on the part of the Turks, they also added that V. Mikeladze and S. Nadiradze, i.e. the members of Akhalkalak's Defence Council, allegedly established for the maintenance of security in the district, had given their consent to that step,¹⁴⁶ so that the Turks would not face any resistance there.

Indeed, the arrival of Kemal's troops in Javakhk was not only conditioned by the Turco-Georgian secret agreement. It was largely due to the Turks' alliance with the Bolsheviks: the Georgian Bolsheviks, i.e. Josef Stalin, B. Mdivany and others, did not differ much from their Menshevik compatriots in their readiness to yield Javakhk to the Turks and thus strip it of its Armenian population. In late 1920, they declared that they were not opposed to ceding the districts of Akhalkalak and Akhaltskha to their ally Turkey.¹⁴⁷ Foreign Minister of Soviet Russia Georgi Chicherin repeatedly sustained this position: the eloquent proof of the aforementioned is his radiogram of December 5, 1920, addressed to the plenipotentiary representatives of the Soviet Socialist Federal Republic of Russia in Transcaucasia. He particularly said, "We will not object if the Turks try to occupy Georgia's disputed territories, especially Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak, but we will not allow them to advance any further."¹⁴⁸ The archive documents found by academician G. Galoyan give us grounds to presume that Chicherin's declaration was

based on Stalin's viewpoint. Probably, it was the People's Commissar who made the Central Committee of Russia's Communist Party adopt a resolution - later Stalin conveyed it to Mdivany - stating that Russia was not going to hinder the Turkish Government from establishing control over the districts of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak.¹⁴⁹ It is not a secret that the Bolshevik leadership viewed the Turkish aggression as a powerful means to Sovietize Armenia and Georgia. Instead of entering into cooperation with the independent Armenian Republic and later Soviet Armenia, the Georgian Mensheviks adopted a pro-Turkish policy which became even more evident after the Soviet regime had been introduced into Armenia.

Kemal's Government did not hesitate to benefit from the opportunity provided by the Bolsheviks and Georgian Mensheviks. Occupying Ardvin and Ardahan on February 23, the Turks invaded Akhalkalak District, whose population was completely deprived of any outside aid.

Ghumantar Pasha's troops, accompanied by Mollah Bayram from Hokam Village, Jamal Agha, as well as a Turkish mob gathered from Ardahan and the local settlements, mounted an offensive first against the district's 15 southern villages and then Kartzakh, Sulda, Dadesh, and Gumburdo. The unequal fighting took away the lives of a great number of inhabitants of Gumburdo, including women, with hundreds of men being taken captive: part of them was killed in the Kur gorge, while the others were suffocated in some wells. The villages of Kartzakh, Dadesh, Vachian, Metz and Pokr Khanchali, Metz and Pokr Gondura, Dilif, Mamzara, Khojabek, Jigrashen, Satkha, Kulikam, and others, as well as Akhalkalak City suffered massacres, outrages, and plunder. The Turkish soldiers forced the population to load the wheat, agricultural instruments, even bed articles and clothes, once belonging to them, onto carts and deliver them to the district's southwestern villages, whence they were to be transported to Turkey.¹⁵⁰ In certain cases, the Armenians were obliged to take that luggage to its destination on foot. Nonetheless, this time the district's population did not resort to resettlement, putting up a fierce resistance against the invaders on the approaches to Alastan, Molit, Tabatzghur, and other villages.¹⁵¹

In the aftermath of the Turkish incursions of 1918 and 1921, Akhalkalak District was stripped of 42 to 45% of its Armenian inhabitants, who fell prey to famine and different epidemics. Thus, in 1917 Akhalkalak City had 5,070 residents, whereas in 1922 they constituted but 2,737 people.¹⁵²

The Problem of Akhalkalak and the Adjacent Districts in the First Years of the Soviet Rule

Having conquered and plundered first Akhalkalak and then Akhaltskha Districts, the Turks attempted to fortify their position so that they might later annex these territories. As is known, Kemal's Government cherished a hope of doing the same with Kars Marz, Alexandropol, Surmalu, Nakhijevan, and the other Armenian districts they had occupied by permission of their allies, i.e. the Bolsheviks. Russia, however, which had succeeded in introducing the Soviet regime into the three Transcaucasian republics thus strengthening its position there, could now conduct a tougher policy towards the Turks, especially taking into account the fact that Turkey was gradually extending its aggression and occupation, thus directly contradicting Russia's interests.

In the middle of March, Kyazim Karabekir, the commander of the Eastern Turkish Front, demanded that the armed forces of Anatoli Gekker, the Commander of the 11th Red Army, should not enter Akhalkalak, Akhaltskha, and Batum, since the Democratic Republic of Georgia had delivered up these lands to Turkey with the consent of the Entente. This was followed by an insolent declaration by Kyazim Bey, Turkey's diplomatic representative in Georgia, made on March 17, "Recently our troops have occupied the district of Batum as well as Akhalkalak, and Akhaltskha by permission of the Georgian Government. In accordance with a decision made by our country's National Assembly and some treaties granting us the rights to do so, we are returning these lands to the country to which they originally belonged. From now on, they will be under the jurisdiction of Turkey's National Government."¹⁵³ In response to these actions, Soviet Russia, though belated, attempted to

suppress the expansionist aspirations of the Turks that it itself had “nourished.”

Relying on the Treaty of Moscow (March 16, 1921) which stated that “Turkey’s northeastern frontier ... runs along the northern administrative borderline of Kars and Ardahan Sanjaks...,”¹⁵⁴ i.e. the southern border of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak Districts, Gekker immediately ordered his army units to enter these lands. This action was followed by the Red Army representative Sergo Orjonikidze’s warning telegram of March 20, to Karabekir, in which the latter was reminded that he had broken the newly-signed Treaty of Moscow. The telegram stated, “I find intolerable the demonstrative violation of the treaty solemnly signed between two allies, i.e. your troops’ penetration into Akhalkalak, Akhaltskha, and Batum. The fact that some people under your command refer to Brest Treaty is absolutely devoid of any grounds; moreover, it is humiliating to us.”¹⁵⁵

The units of the 11th Red Army entered Akhalkalak in the second half of March 1921. They had arrived in Lori via Sovietized Armenia, but entered Akhalkalak via Georgia, i.e. by the route of Borzhom-Akhaltskha, a fact that would prove to be of more than minor significance later, when the issue of the district’s belonging was being settled. In any event, the 11th Army’s arrival in Javakhk at least prevented further violence, which the Turks were sure to commit against the local Armenians. A report written in those days confirms this: “The people keep stating that if Soviet Russia’s troops had delayed reaching Akhalkalak by even a single day, the Armenians of Javakhk would have certainly been doomed to extermination by the Turks.”¹⁵⁶

The Turkish High Command did not dare to oppose the arrival of the Red Army in Akhalkalak. The soldiers of the “allies” did not enter into any conflict with each other; moreover, before pulling out of the district in April, the Turkish troops lived “peacefully” side by side with the Red Army units on account of Javakhk’s ever-suffering population.

No tangible changes occurred in the district after the Turkish soldiers left it. Within a short time, the newly-founded Georgian-Bolshevik Administration, predominantly consisting of Georgians, started perpetrat-

ing different kinds of violence against the Armenians. A document written by the people of Akhalkalak says, "Now that the devastated district has appeared in rather a grave predicament, one involuntarily thinks that the Soviet Georgian Government will secure its peaceful existence and even help its inhabitants, but the facts prove quite the opposite..."¹⁵⁷

Under those conditions, Javakhs Armenians started sending still more and more petitions to the Revolutionary Committees of Soviet Armenia and Georgia, the leadership of the Red Army, and other bodies to unite the district with either Soviet Armenia or Russia. One of the letters the representatives of Sulda, Mragoval, Dadesh, Vachian and Kartzakh Villages addressed to Armenia's representative in Georgia on April 23 said, "We are applying to You with a request to unite our district, 60,000 of whose 80,000 population are Armenians, ... with the Republic of Armenia. ... If our district joins Armenia or becomes part of Soviet Russia, we will get rid of the Turkish yataghan and escape the danger of massacres... and pressure. Otherwise, we will not be able to stay in our native land, which has turned into utter hell for us in the last several years, and will be obliged to emigrate into the depths of Russia..."¹⁵⁸

On May 2, 1921, the Caucasian Bureau of Russia's Communist Party established an Ad Hoc Committee to settle the territorial disputes amongst the newly-founded Soviet republics of Transcaucasia. In order to present the approaches of the Armenian side to that body, on May 9 a conference was convened in Yerevan. It was attended by A. Mravian, P. Makintian, S. Lukashin, and G. Khojamirian, with Al. Myasnikian, the President of the Revolutionary Committee, who had arrived in the Armenian capital on May 4, chairing it. After People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs Mravian had presented his report on the "Determination of the Internal Frontiers with Azerbaijan and Georgia," the meeting decided to set up a committee comprising S. Hambardzumian, H. Lazian, A. Gharagyoian, and proper specialists, headed by Mravian.¹⁵⁹ It began its activity by compiling the necessary material concerning the problem. A number of competent people were charged with writing reports on the territories, including Khram (Tzalka) and Akhalkalak, considered disput-

ed between Armenia and its two neighboring Soviet republics. Poghos Abelian, who had moved from Tiflis to Yerevan on June 16 at the invitation of his old friend Myasnikian, was assigned the task of preparing a document on Khram.

From June 25 to 27, 1921, the Committee of the Caucasian Bureau convened its first session in Tiflis, with Sergei Kirov chairing it. The membership of that body presented the following picture: 2 representatives from Georgia, 3 from Azerbaijan, and only one from Armenia, i.e. Al. Bekzadian. Obviously, a committee with such an unequal number of members would not be able to defend the national and state interests of the Armenian people, and its very first session came to prove it. Mentioning the unfair administrative division implemented under Tsarism, Soviet Armenia's grave socio-economic situation and, particularly, the problem of housing facing the Armenian refugees scattered throughout the world in the aftermath of the massacres perpetrated in the Ottoman Empire, Bekzadian applied to the Committee with a request to cede Akhalkalak District (72% Armenians), Lori, and Nagorno Karabakh (94% Armenians) to Armenia. He, however, remained all alone against the Georgian and Azerbaijani majority, with Kirov taking their side. They rejected Bekzadian's proposal of territorial changes, fearing that their approval would pave the way for the reawakening of counter-revolutionary elements in Georgia and Azerbaijan. The Armenian representative of the Committee demanded that the issue be considered by the Caucasian Bureau of Russia's Communist Party.¹⁶⁰

Fulfilling Mravian's assignment, in July 1921, Poghos Abelian presented an extended document¹⁶¹ which substantiated Akhalkalak Armenians' rightful desire to join Armenia from historical, geographical, demographic, and economic standpoints.¹⁶² Abelian particularly wrote, "Javakhk Armenians consider the Menshevik Government even worse than the Turkish one. Their bitter experiences with the Georgians have made them extremely fearful so that they do not want to deal with any Georgian Government. This is the truth. The Akhalkalak inhabitants want to see their native district forever impregnable to Turkish

intrusion, i.e. [they want to see it as part of] Russia. If this is not to be realized, they want to become part of Soviet Armenia.”¹⁶³ Abelian thought it absolutely unacceptable to introduce autonomy into the disputed areas: he was convinced that even if that was carried out, Tzalka and Javakhk would enjoy self-government under Armenia’s auspices.¹⁶⁴

The study of some archive documents reveals that the leadership of Soviet Armenia had seriously prepared for the forthcoming session of the Caucasian Bureau of Russia’s Communist Party, which was to consider its border disputes with Georgia and Azerbaijan. The Armenian side had drawn up special documents regarding Borchalu and Akhalkalak (probably, relating to other disputed territories as well) in which the Armenians presented firm grounds for these territories’ unification with Armenia from all possible viewpoints. The National Archives of Armenia preserve a valuable document which actually expresses Armenia’s official position on the problem of Lori and Akhalkalak Districts, considered disputed between Armenia and Georgia. This unique document, written in Russian - a fact suggesting that it was addressed to the Caucasian Bureau of Russia’s Communist Party - has several duplicates, only one of which contains a date. The existence of several copies kept in various funds and folders indicates that the document, which was of immense importance, was copied and distributed to a number of officials in Soviet Armenia. This is also proved by a handwritten Russian sentence on one of them saying, “To make 5 copies.”¹⁶⁵ The same copy also reveals that the Central Committee of Armenia’s Communist Party bore all responsibility for the document (written at the top of it). Strange as it is, these words have been erased by pen, the only redaction this copy of the document has undergone.¹⁶⁶

This “secret” becomes clear when we get acquainted with another duplicate of the document, in which we come across the words “Armenia’s Council of People’s Commissars” instead of the “Central Committee of Armenia’s Communist Party.”¹⁶⁷ Apparently, at first the authors of the document, Myasnikian, Bekzadian, and Mravian, submit-

ted it as the official position of the Central Committee of Armenia's Communist Party, but then replaced this body with the Council of People's Commissars, presumably supposing that the latter, which was the executive body of power in the country, might be more influential from a legal standpoint.¹⁶⁸

Now let us try to verify the year the document dates from. The use of the words "Council of People's Commissars of Armenia" suggests that it could not have been prepared earlier than May 21, 1921, when the Council of People's Commissars replaced Armenia's Military and Revolutionary Committee. Nor could it have been written later than the beginning of July, when the Caucasian Bureau of Russia's Communist Party was to convene a session on the territorial disputes, for the document was to be presented at that very meeting.

Now let us consider the contents of the document. Armenia's Council of People's Commissars found it expedient that Akhalkalak District should join the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia taking into account the following facts:

1 The district's demographic picture, namely the overwhelming numerical superiority of the local Armenians. According to the Caucasian Calendar for 1917, Akhalkalak's population consisted of 82,775 Armenians; 10,305 Georgians; 6,335 Muslims and 7,542 Russians, the other nationalities forming a smaller number.

2 Armenia's geographical position, which was more favourable for the administration of the district. "The governance of Akhalkalak District is more convenient for Armenia than Georgia," the text of the document reads. "The road of Akhalkalak-Bogdanovka-Yermolovka...-Alexandropol, which connects the district with Armenia, remains open throughout winter, whereas the one to Georgia is often impassable due to snow storms."

3 The lands lying unoccupied due to the decrease in the number of the local population could be allocated to the Western Armenian refugees.

4 The Armeno-Georgian agreement of January 9 to 17, 1919 (signed in Tiflis), which declared the district a disputed territory.

The aforementioned clearly shows that Alexander Bekzadian, People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, defended most of these approaches in his meetings with the Georgian and Azerbaijani leadership in May and June. This fact gives rise to the presumption that this patriot himself participated in the preparation of the document. One of its copies twice mentions his name, written in ink in Russian, "Comrade A. Bekzadian" and "A. B."¹⁶⁹ The same duplicate also contains Mravian's signature, which suggests that it was truly an official document.

Thus, what solutions were devised for the territorial disputes? From July 2 till 7, 1921, the Caucasian Bureau of Russia's Communist Party convened a plenary session attended by Stalin, People's Commissar of Soviet Russia, known for his concealed anti-Armenian activity. On July 7, the Caucasian Bureau, amongst a large number of agenda items, dealt with the problem of Lori and Akhalkalak Districts, regarded as disputed between the Soviet Socialist Republics of Armenia and Georgia. With a vote of 6 in favour and one abstaining, the meeting decided to unite the Neutral Zone of Lori with Armenia and assign the question of the unification of Khram (Tzalka) and Akhalkalak with Soviet Armenia to the Central Committee of Georgia's Communist Party, which was to submit its conclusion to the plenary session of the Caucasian Bureau.¹⁷⁰ Indeed, the Georgian Bolsheviks were sure to reject the demand of the Armenian side and the subsequent events came to prove this. On July 16, the Politburo of the Central Committee of Georgia's Communist Party declared Soviet Armenia's proposal unacceptable, justifying this decision by some "political considerations," and fabricating unconvincing economic links Tiflis had with these districts (rather a flimsy excuse!).¹⁷¹ By a "surprising" coincidence, several days before, i.e. on July 5, the Caucasian Bureau had decided to partition off another region, Nagorno Karabakh, from Armenia and include it in Azerbaijan's territory, adducing the same "arguments." Thus, due to the Georgian-Azerbaijani unanimity against Armenia that was so evident in July 1921, the party-affiliated bodies decided to deliver up Historical Javakhk to Georgia. Despite

this, however, the Armenians continued struggling for all the disputed territories in the months and years that followed.

From 1918 to 1921, the issue of Javakhk's unification with Armenia remained unsettled for the following main reasons. The Republic of Armenia, which prioritized the unification of Western Armenia rather than the territories annexed by Georgia and Azerbaijan, did not manifest proper persistence to achieve that objective. About half of Javakhk's Armenian population, i.e. nearly 40,000 people, fell victim to the Turkish incursions of 1918 and 1921, in the aftermath of which the district appeared in a total economic slump, hindering the local inhabitants from extending their struggle for the unification with their homeland. Indeed, the tough position of the Georgian Government, the ambiguous policy conducted by England, the Armeno-Turkish war of 1920, Kemal's Government's alliance with the Mensheviks, the annexation of both Javakhk and its neighboring Alexandropol by the Turkish troops after Georgia's Sovietization in March 1921, and a number of other factors only came to add to the aforementioned, rendering that fair struggle still more and more difficult.¹⁷²

The Georgian side temporarily held a reconciliatory stand towards the pro-Armenian decision of the Caucasian Bureau of Russia's Communist Party regarding the Neutral Zone of Lori (this decision was based on the local Armenians' firm determination to join Armenia). In the case of Akhalkalak, however, they clung to their position and did achieve some success. Their preference of Akhalkalak, which is mainly agricultural in nature, to Lori, which is rich in woods and copper mines, was not incidental. By taking possession of Akhalkalak, Georgia would secure an external link with the neighboring country of Turkey, which had been given Ardahan District adjoining Javakhk and Ardvin Okrug adjacent to it, in compliance with the Treaty of Moscow of 1921. Putting forward certain claims to these areas, the authorities of the Republic of Georgia intended to unify them with their country at the forthcoming Kars Conference to be held in the autumn, but that would, indeed, be impossible without Akhalkalak.

In the middle of July 1921, Javakhk Armenians, who had learnt about the aforementioned decisions made by the Caucasian Bureau and the Politburo of the Central Committee of Georgia's Communist Party, addressed numerous letters of protest to Moscow, Tiflis, and Yerevan. The Georgian Revolutionary Committee added fuel to the flames. Arustamov, a famous Bolshevik held in high esteem among Akhalkalak Armenians, was dismissed from his post of President of Akhalkalak's Revolutionary Committee. The local inhabitants' appeals to return him proved futile and "Comrade Arustamov was obliged to abandon Akhalkalak, the people holding mass rallies in his honour."¹⁷⁴

A short time later, S. Nadiradze, one of the leaders of the firing squad in the Mensheviks' times, was appointed chief of the district's police. The local Revolutionary Committee, however, had to dismiss him under the pressure of the population, who hated him. Despite that, Tiflis' Georgian Bolsheviks restored Nadiradze's position, giving him even greater power. The new wave of protest raised by the locals forced the Georgian Government to send an Ad Hoc Committee to the district. A group of people, including Mnoyan, a famous Bolshevik and one of the members of the Revolutionary Committee, were taken into police custody and sent to Tiflis, where the Cheka (Extraordinary Commission), i.e. the Bolsheviks' secret police, was to decide their fate. A month later, another ad hoc committee arrived in the district and arrested Karapet Ghazanjian, an activist of the movement for the establishment of Soviet rule in Akhalkalak and one of the founding members of the local Revolutionary Committee. Ghazanjian was sent to Tiflis with charges of "nationalistic" activity. It is interesting to note that in February 1921, Karapet, then commanding one of the companies of the 11th Red Army, had distinguished himself at the battles for the liberation of Lori from the Georgian Mensheviks. Thus, the prominent Armenians were gradually ousted from the District Administration, now comprising predominantly Georgians who were indisputably a minority in Akhalkalak.

V. Poyajian from Akhalkalak wrote the following to Armenia's diplomatic representative in Tiflis with regard to the daily increase of atroci-

ties in the district, "In a word, I can adduce thousands of facts, but is it right to write about them? The only thing I can tell You is that the local population is very discontent. They are constantly looking for somebody to defend and support them, but such people are being removed from their fields of activity. The authorities keep plotting intrigues and stifling every single voice of protest. Indeed, You are well-aware of all this, for we are constantly complaining against these conditions."¹⁷⁵

Parallel with the carnage of the Armenian Communist officials, from April to July 1921, the Georgian Government took certain measures to deprive the Armenian peasantry of their property. The local Turkish population, who had taken an active part in the Armenian massacres and plunder of their settlements, accumulating riches on account of the property robbed from the Armenians during both Turkish incursions, now enjoyed the Georgian authorities' compassion.¹⁷⁶ Thus, Akhalkalak Armenians, who had suffered tens of thousands of fatalities during the two Turkish invasions and gone through various persecutions under Georgian domination, were to be subjected to the Georgian Bolsheviks' nationalistic manoeuvres in the spring and summer of 1921. It is by no means accidental that in those days, the representatives of certain villages, especially Catholic ones, made some steps to resettle their fellow villagers in Russia. A number of private individuals had already left their houses so that the Government of Soviet Georgia, which faced the danger of the possible desolation of the district, issued a special decree banning the Armenians from leaving their settlements.¹⁷⁷

Interestingly enough, the numerous petitions Akhalkalak Armenians addressed to the authorities of Soviet Armenia - it is impossible to read them without emotion and indignation - viewed the district's unification with Armenia as the only possible way out of the dreadful situation reigning there. One of them reads, "Akhalkalak should join Soviet Armenia ...in order to lift the blockade of Javakhetia, ... stop the continual visits of the Commissars Extraordinary, put an end to the outrages and robbery that have permeated through the district. This is the sacred wish of the Armenian inhabitants, constituting 75 % of the entire district's population."¹⁷⁸

Even after the decisions of the Caucasian Bureau of Russia's Communist Party (July 5 to 7, 1921) and the Bureau of the Central Committee of Georgia's Communist Party (July 16), the national wing of the Armenian Bolsheviks made some attempts to question the final fate of Javakhk and Nagorno Karabakh. On the order of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia, Surkhatian, Armenia's diplomatic representative in Tiflis, sent his Yerevan colleagues the documents the Armenian side had submitted at the July session of the Caucasian Bureau, including the aforementioned famous one on the Armeno-Georgian territorial disputes, prepared by Soviet Armenia's Council of People's Commissars. As this document itself reveals, one of the high-ranking officials who received it was Alexander Bekzadian, distinguished for his devotion to national issues and competence in that particular problem. On July 27, 1921, the Armenian authorities drew up a new document - it actually repeated the previous one with some minor changes and Mravian's signature - in which they again insisted on unifying Akhalkalak District and part of Borchalu with Soviet Armenia, regarding it as a fair and expedient settlement of the problem from the standpoint of ethnography, the easiness of governance, and the housing of thousands of Armenian refugees.¹⁷⁹

To prevent the mass emigration of Akhalkalak Armenians, to alleviate their indignation and find some settlement to their problem, Myasnikian arrived in Javakhk. During his meetings with the local population - the inhabitants of Filipovka,¹⁸⁰ Gumburdo, Sulda, and other villages still remember this visit, for it was told from generation to generation - he tried to convince them of the "great prospects" of coexistence in a single Soviet state, even though in different republics. Myasnikian also attempted to persuade them to abstain from the dangerous emigration. The subsequent events came to prove his visit's usefulness: the tension considerably abated in the district, many people started cherishing hopes that their situation might still improve once new authorities came to power in Georgia, and the Transcaucasian Federation was established. Thus, for both objective and subjective reasons, the district escaped the danger of mass emigration.

While the Armenian political figures were seeking a settlement of the Armeno-Georgian disputes, some of the Georgian Bolsheviks launched a struggle to introduce changes into the July 7 decision of the ^{of the} Caucasian Bureau of Russia's Communist Party. They made use of every single opportunity to express their discontent to the leadership of Soviet Armenia and Russia with their "loss" of Lori. Actually, their actions pursued the aim of counterbalancing the Armenian side's dissatisfaction with the decision to unite Tzalka and Akhalkalak with Georgia.

Soon the Georgians became more explicit in the expression of their objectives. The National Archives of Armenia preserve a valuable document (Fund of the Council of People's Commissars of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, No. 113) which represents the official stand of the Government of Armenia on the suggestion of the Georgian side with regard to border changes to be made in the Neutral Zone of Lori. It was written not earlier than the adoption of the July 7, 1921 decision and not later than the Armeno-Georgian border agreement of November 6.¹⁸¹ Georgia suggested that Lambalu (present-day Bagratashen) and Kerpili Villages in Sadakhlo Sector should be included in its borders, and the Armeno-Georgian border should be moved from the former Neutral Zone of Lori to the watershed by the mountain peak of Kulutash, i.e. the summit of Somkhit Mountains. Thus, Georgia would acquire the 15-verst section of Sadakhlo-Ayrum Railway and an area of 75 square versts rich in wheat. In case these border changes were accepted, the Georgians would acquire the Armenian settlements of Brdadzor, Khozhorni, Opret, Agh-Kyorpi, and Jadar (also Jandar), as well as the Turkish village of Saati and still other villages, covering 350 square versts of an area rich in woods. In other words, this plan directly raised the question of reconsidering the July 7, 1921 decision of the Caucasian Bureau of Russia's Communist Party.

The authors of the aforementioned document, who were either members of Soviet Armenia's Council of People's Commissars or its representatives, regarded the Georgians' proposals as extremely harmful and unacceptable for Armenia. Moreover, certain parts of the Georgians' sug-

gestion had been deliberately left vague so that they would be able to seize greater territories, if possible - this was the case in the section of Shamlugh's copper mines. The specialists working in Soviet Armenia's Council of People's Commissars thought that from ethnographic, economic, and other standpoints, the villages of Agh-Kyorpi, Opret, Khokhmel, Brdadzor, Gyulibagh, Damia, Lijkadzor, Khozhorni, Chanakhchi, Jojkan, and others should be included in Armenia's territory. As the Armenian document emphasized, "In no way is it possible to shift the borderline from Sadakhlo Village to the divide by Mount Kulutash, since this will deprive Armenia of its source of timber."¹⁸² It is clear that the Armenian authorities attempted to keep the line of demarcation of the Neutral Zone and were against having the villages north of the watershed annexed to Georgia.

At last, with the support of Moscow and Azerbaijan, the Georgian Bolsheviks succeeded in annexing the aforementioned villages; in addition, they had already succeeded in putting forward the issue of Tzalka and Akhalkalak for further consideration.

After harsh discussions and preparatory work, on November 6, 1921, the sides met in Tiflis to sign an agreement on the Armeno-Georgian line of demarcation; the signatories were Alexander Myasnikian and Budu Mdivany, Chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of Georgia. The preamble of the agreement underlined that it had been achieved through the "full consent" of both leaders of the socialist republics. In fact, this formulation directly suggested that the sides had reached the agreement with difficulty and, furthermore, with pressure exerted on Armenia.

According to this document, the Armeno-Georgian line of demarcation was to extend from the peak of Uch-Tapalar, i.e. the boundary of Turkey-Armenia-Georgia, and stretch east up to Mount Ortul Dagh. Then it was to run northeast and east, leaving Lake Madatapa and Troyitskoye Village to Georgia, and Tato Kharaba (present-day Bavra Village of Shirak Marz, Republic of Armenia), Karmir Kharaba and Darakey (Saragyugh) Villages to Armenia up to Legli Dagh (the present-day peak of Achkasar in the Javakhk Mountains). Further, the border was to extend

through the divide of the Somkhit Mountains up to Mount Palutli Bashi, which also marked the beginning of the Armeno-Azerbaijani frontier. The Armeno-Georgian border was fixed according to the preferences of the Georgian leadership. Unwilling to confine themselves to such a modification of the frontier, they also added a special note at the bottom of the document stating, "The villages of Irganchay, Sati, Jandar, Agh-Kyorpi, Opret, Khozhorni, Brdadzor, and Sadakhlo are to remain north of the fixed line, i.e. within the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic."¹⁸³ As is indicated, the borders of Alexandropol and Akhalkalak reflected the administrative division implemented under Tsarism, while the former frontier of the Neutral Zone of Lori had been completely changed in favor of Georgia. Some historiographical works and others on political science state that the July 7 session of the Caucasian Bureau of Russia's Communist Party decided to grant Armenia total control over the Neutral Zone of Lori. As the aforementioned shows, however, this was not the case. Those sustaining this viewpoint have not noticed that the Armeno-Georgian borderline was mainly determined by the November 6 agreement of 1921.

Tightening the grip on their "rights" to the disputed territories by the signed agreement, the Georgian Bolsheviks did not stop their struggle to annex new Armenian territories. In these endeavors, they were supported by Azerbaijan, which was planning to hold a referendum in Karabakh to finally "legalize" the annexation of the region and, indeed, expected Georgia's assistance in it. The Georgian-Azerbaijani alliance, established in the spring of 1921, clearly manifested itself at the July 2 to 7 sessions of the Caucasian Bureau of Russia's Communist Party, and had new consequences for Armenia in late 1921 and early 1922. The "fraternal" republics created obstacles for the delivery of food from Russia to Armenia. In a telegram of January 21, 1922 addressed to Surkhatian, Soviet Armenia's diplomatic representative in Tiflis, Mravian, asked the former to take some measures to lift the blockade imposed on Armenia and secure the transportation of the products via Akhalkalak from Russia and through Ghazakh from Azerbaijan.¹⁸⁴ In addition, Soviet Georgia's

leadership postponed the withdrawal of their troops from the territories given to Armenia (Privolny and Vorontsovka, i.e. present-day Tashir), and the official delivery of these territories to the Armenian side.¹⁸⁵ Under such conditions, Armenia attempted to achieve at least the settlement of some minor internal border issues and secure the autonomy of the Armenians in the territories ceded to Georgia. In 1922 a group of Armenian political figures submitted a plan which provided for the establishment of a single independent Armenian administrative unit within the territory of Soviet Georgia on the basis of Akhalkalak District and the aforementioned Armenian villages in Borchalu. However, the Georgian political circles and intellectuals, particularly historian Iv. Javakhashvili, were violently opposed to that plan, considering it a step aimed at splitting their country. Ultimately, they succeeded in having it rejected in 1923.¹⁸⁶

The border disputes between the two republics continued even after the conclusion of the November 6, 1921 agreement so that soon a Committee of the Districts' Administrative-Territorial Division was set up at the Central Executive Committee of the Transcaucasian Federation to study the frontier disputes facing the three republics. This body summarized its work at a session held in Tiflis on April 30, 1923, with S. Hambardzumian, President of the Central Executive Committee of the Transcaucasian Federation, chairing it. At that meeting Armenia was represented by Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs H. Kostanian, A. Atabekian, a member of the collegium of the People's Commissariat of Lands, and other specialized officials. The first issue on the agenda treated the Armeno-Georgian border districts, i.e. Akhalkalak and Alexandropol on the one hand, and Lori and Borchalu (North-Lori) on the other. No border changes were intended for the former, whereas the latter were to be subjected to certain finalization.¹⁸⁷

Nevertheless, despite all the modifications introduced into Transcaucasia's internal borders by different committees and carried out in accordance with various decisions, the frontier disputes still persisted. On November 5, 1923, the Central Executive Committee of the

Transcaucasian Federation approved the establishment of a new Committee of Lands, which comprised S. Kasian, Sturua, and Yekubov.¹⁸⁸ Carrying out tangible work on the basis of a vast amount of factual materials collected, by the late 1920s and early 30s it had already realized certain border modifications.

To sum up the chapter devoted to the history of Javakhk in the period between 1917 and 1921, let us reconsider the general tendencies of those years.

As a result of the discussions resumed in Armenian and Georgian public and political circles on the eve of World War I, in 1917 the sides reached mutual agreement on Transcaucasia's administrative-territorial redivision. The ethnographical approach was declared a fair principle. In case of its implementation, Akhalkalak District, which was mainly Armenian-populated, together with most of Lori District (it was to be partitioned off from Tiflis Province), would have been attached to either Yerevan Province or the future province of Alexandropol. Soon, however, a considerable part of the Georgian political parties renounced this principle, adopting rather a tough and unyielding position on the disputed territories.

In the aftermath of the Turkish invasion of Akhalkalak District in May 1918, the local Armenians and Georgians resettled in Bakurian and Tzalka. The newly-established Republic of Georgia displayed a highly unfavorable attitude towards the Armenian refugees; moreover, after the Turks had left the occupied areas in the autumn, the Georgians annexed Lori and Akhalkalak. This was followed by the outbreak of an Armeno-Georgian war in December. The British High Command committed itself to acting as a mediator in the termination of the hostilities. However, it obviously took Georgia's side, compelling Armenia to declare Lori a Neutral Zone and imposing on the country the decision to provisionally yield Akhalkalak to Georgia with some guarantees of its population's safety. Throughout 1918 to 1920, numerous conferences were held in Tiflis to decide the disposition of these districts, but in vain. The sides did not reach any settlement; moreover, the Georgian authorities started

exerting national and social pressure on Akhalkalak Armenians who had appeared under their control.

In March 1921, Kemal's troops occupied Akhalkalak District and slaughtered the local Armenian population. Unfortunately, after the brief Turkish rule, Soviet Georgia continued the Mensheviks' policy of national discrimination in the district. In 1921 and 1922, the national wing of the Armenian Bolsheviks made some endeavors to unite the densely-populated Armenian districts of Tzalka and Akhalkalak with Soviet Armenia or at least grant them autonomy within Georgia's territory, but in vain. Alexander Myasnikian and the Armenian members of his party had great difficulty in preventing Javakhk Armenians' possible emigration into Russia. In the 1920s, some modification was carried out in the Armeno-Georgian frontier, as a result of which Armenia suffered additional territorial losses.

REFERENCES

- 1 **Jamalian, A.** My Response...., in: "Haraj," June 28, 1928, No. 685, p. 2.
- 2 **Իշխանյան Բ.,** Հայ-վրացական հարաբերությունների պրոբլեմը (քննական վերլուծություն), Թ. (Ishkhanian, B. The Problem of the Armeno-Georgian Relations. A Critical Analysis. Tiflis), 1914, p. 40:
- 3 "Politika," Tbilisi, 1998, Nos. 4-6, p. 2.
- 4 "Horizon," Tiflis, 1918, No. 10.
- 5 **Jamalian, A.** The Armeno-Georgian Problem. p. 87.
- 6 National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 104, p. 45. The district of Akhalkalak, 72 per cent of whose population were Armenians, occupied an area of 3,400 square kilometres together with the Armenian villages in the neighbourhood of Tzalka (Khram) and Lake Tabatzghur (see *idem*, p. 13).
- 7 Apart from Z. Avalov, the Committee also included Georgian representatives G. Lordkipanidze, S. Avaliaḡny, Armenians A.I. Khatissian and A. Shahkhatunian, Tartars Khan Khoyski and A. Sheikhulislamov as well as highlanders V. Jabatiyev and A. Namitov. **Тунян В.,** Карабахский конфликт, Е. (**Tunian, V.** The Conflict of Karabkh. Yerevan), 1999, c.16.
- 8 National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 104, pp. 2-8. The Sub-Committee also suggested that the districts of Karabakh and Zangezur, that were predominantly Armenian-inhabited, be partitioned off from Yelizavetpol Province. The Muslim representatives of that body, however, refused to endorse the document by signature under the excuse of not being entitled to do so (*ibid*).

- 9 Alexandropol Province was to consist of five districts, i.e. Alexandropol, Akhalkalak, Lori, Kars and Kaghzvan, with a population of 719, 000 (474,000, i.e. 68 per cent of them were Armenians). The inhabitants of Akhalkalak District amounted to 120,000, including 94,000 (77 %) Armenians.
- 10 ՍԽԻՅԿՅԱՆ Վ., 1917. Փետրվարյան հեղափոխությունը և Հայաստանը, Ե. (Melikian, V. The February 1917 Revolution and Armenia. Yerevan), 1997, p. 119:
- 11 Шахатунян А., Административный передел Закавказья, Т. (Shahkhatunian, A. The Administrative Repartition of Transcaucasia. Tiflis), 1918.
- 12 Simonian, H. R. The Times of Andranik, vol. 1, p. 609.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Jamalian, A. The Armeno-Georgian Problem, pp. 82-83.
- 15 Simonian, H. R., idem, vol. 1. pp. 647-648.
- 16 "Mshak," 1918, No. 16.
- 17 For further details, see Սանոսյան Ա., Ախալցխայի և Ախալքալաքի զավատների 1918 թ. ինքնապաշտպանությունը, Ե. (Sanossian, A. The 1918 Self-Defence of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak Districts. Yerevan), 1992; idem, Թշնամու դեմ ուս ուսի, Ախալցխայի 1918թ. հերոսամարտը, Խորհրդային Հայաստան, 14 նոյեմբեր, 1989 (Shoulder to Shoulder against the Enemy. The 1918 Heroic Struggle of Akhaltskha. In: "Khorhrdayin Hayastan," November 14, 1989), as well as the memoirs of Yervand Simonian. Մինոնյան Ե., Ախալցխան կրակե օղակում, Ե., 2000 (Simonian, E. Akhaltskha in a Fiery Circle. Yerevan). An eye-witness of these events, he participated in Akhaltskha's six-month self-defence.
- 18 Simonian, H. R., idem, vol. 1, p. 666. According to A. Harutiunian, that regiment was to be included in the Armenian Corps acting as a separate artillery battalion. Besides, a field engineers' battalion was also to be established in Akhaltskha (see Harutiunian, A. O. The Caucasian Front between 1914 and 1917, pp. 332-334).
- 19 Thanks to the prudent policy implemented by mayor of Akhaltskha Zori Zorian, the Armeno-Georgian forces were hindered from perpetrating any outrages against the local Turkish population during the period of the Turkish occupation of the district lasting from May until November. As a result, the local Turks (most of them did not abandon Akhaltskha, despite all the subsequent events) and the Ottoman troops spared the Christians. Moreover, that enabled Akhaltskha's Armenian and Georgian populations to escape the disastrous displacement.
- 20 National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 3, pp. 125ա-126; "Mshak," 1918, No. 81.
- 21 Sanossian, A., idem, pp. 82-87, 160-163; Simonian, E., idem, pp. 38-41, Շարժում, Ախալցխա ("Sharzhum," Akhaltskha), 1918, No. 29.
- 22 Sanossian, A., idem, pp. 146-147.

- 23 Documents and Materials on the Foreign Policy of Transcaucasia and Georgia, pp. 310-311. Cf. **Jamalian, A.**, My Response..., p. 2.
- 24 During the May 26 session of the Sejm, when the Federation's defeat at the war had already become a reality, Menshevik leader I. Tzereteli made a speech harshly criticizing the Musavatists for the encouragement of the splitting actions of the Muslims of Akhalkalak and Akhaltskha and their contribution to the Turkish occupation plans (see Documents and Materials on the Foreign Policy of Transcaucasia and Georgia, pp. 324-325). Through such an approach, Tzereteli was attempting to "rid" his party of its share of responsibility for the liquidation of the Transcaucasian Federation and the territorial concessions made in behalf of Turkey.
- 25 **Jamalian, A.** The Armeno-Georgian Problem. In: "Hayrenik," April 1928, p. 89.
- 26 Poghos Grigor Abelian (1877 to 1943), one of the most famous figures of the Armenian National Liberation Movement, was also an economist, lawyer, pedagogue, writer and a translator. Born in Gumburdo Village of Akhalkalak District, he later became a graduate of Gevorgian Jemaran (*an Armenian spiritual institution of higher education*) of Echmiatzin, Nersissian School of Tiflis, Lazarian Jemaran of Moscow and the Law Faculty of Moscow University. One of the adherents of the Socialist Ramkavar Party and the leader of the movement for the unification of Javakhk and Armenia, he founded a Liberation Circle in Akhalkalak to foster the anti-Turkish struggle in Western Armenia. In 1914 he participated in the organization of the Armenian volunteer groups and rendered tangible aid to the Western Armenian refugees to settle in their homeland between 1916 and 1917. Abelian, who was member of many Caucasian Armenian societies, initiated the establishment of the Department of Akhalkalak Armenians and worked as its secretary. He carried out considerable work to save Akhalkalak fugitives from famine and epidemics. **Մելքոնյան Ա., Արեւիյան Պողոս, Հայկական հարց, Ե. (Melkonyan, A. Poghos Abelian. The Armenian Question. Yerevan), 1996, p. 7.**
- 27 National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 3, p. 123ա.
- 28 **Simonian, H. R.** The Times of Andranik, vol. 2, p. 103.
- 29 *Idem*, p. 104.
- 30 **Չելեպյան Ա., Չորսվար Անդրանիկ և հայ հեղափոխական շարժումը, Ե. (Chelepian, A. War-Lord Andranik and the Armenian Revolutionary Movement. Yerevan), 1990, p. 449:**
- 31 **Поручик Колмаков о деятельности Андраника в 1918 г., ЛՀԳ (First Lieutenant Kolmakov about the Activity of Andranik in 1918. In: "Լրեր Hasarakakan Gitutiunneri,") 1988, No. 8, p. 67.**
- 32 **Aghayan, Tz.** From the History of the Liberation Struggle of the Armenian Nation, pp. 598-599. In those days, Javakhk was waiting for Andranik's arrival with the utmost enthusiasm.

- 33 **Simonian, H. R.**, idem, p. 113; **Կարապետյան Հ., Անդրանիկ**, հ. 3, Ե. (**Karapetian, H. Andranik**, vol. 3. Yerevan), 1994, p. 496.
- 34 **Simonian, H. R.**, idem, p. 118.
- 35 **Simonian, H. R.**, idem, pp. 115-116. Indeed, V. Ayvazian, the charge d'affaires of Akhalkalak's National Council, highly exaggerates the number of the warriors of the district's regiment and the fugitives who had found refuge there.
- 36 Из истории иностранной интервенции в Армении в 1918 г. Документы, Е. (From the History of the Foreign Intervention in Armenia in 1918. Yerevan), 1970, с.116; **Հարությունյան Ա. Հ., Թուրքական ինտերվենցիան Անդրկովկաս 1918 թ. և ինքնապաշտպանական կռիվները**, Ե. (**Harutiunian, A. H. The Turkish Intervention in Transcaucasia in 1918 and the Self-Defence**. Yerevan), 1984, p. 171.
- 37 On May 17, General Nazarbekian, who was unaware of Akhalkalak's situation after the Turkish invasion of the district, ordered Colonel Arakelov to join Andranik's unit and act in unanimity with him (**Simonian, H. R.**, idem, vol. 2, p. 133). By obeying that command, however, Arakelov would leave the local Armenians absolutely defenseless; besides, by the time Andranik arrived in Lori, the Turks had already taken control over all the roads leading to him.
- 38 Several days after their first invasion of Akhalkalak District, the Turks pretended to be leaving it. Believing in that, part of the refugees returned, but in the second half of May, the enemy came back and took possession of some of the property the fugitives had brought with them, slaughtering thousands of people.
- 39 National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 17, p. 34.
- 40 **Արսեն քահանա Բրեցյան, Ախալքալաքի գաղթականությունը, Հորիզոն**, 1918, 27 հունիս (The Refugees of Akhalkalak by Priest Arsen Belertsian. In: "Horizon," June 27, 1918), No. 125.
- 41 Personal Archives of Leo, fund 1, list 1, file 242, pp. 4-5.
- 42 National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 17, pp. 34-35; Personal Archives of Leo, fund 1, list 1, file 242, p. 5. For further information about the massacre perpetrated in Khorenia Village, see **Կիրակոսյան Խ., Խորենիա գյուղի ջարդի 80-ամյակին. Հայաստանի Հանրապետություն**, 1998, 27 հունիս (**Kirakossian, Kh. To the 80th Anniversary of the Massacre of Khorenia Village**. In: "Hayastani Hanrapetutiun," June 27, 1998), p. 7.
- 43 For further details, see **Sanossian, A.**, idem, pp. 177-195.
- 44 "Horizon," June 27, 1918, No. 125.
- 45 Personal Archives of Leo, fund 1, list 1, file 264, pp. 1-2; National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 3, p. 1217ա, cf. **Jamalian, A.**, idem, in: "Hayrenik," p. 90; "Horizon," June 27, 1918, No. 125.
- 46 The activity of the underground armed groups under the Turkish rule was reflected in a novel by famous prose writer Mkrtych Sargissian from Javakhk in origin («Խաչված քաղաքը» ("The Crucified City"), Ե., 1996).

- 47 **Simonian, E.** Akhalks'ha in a Fiery Circle, pp. 103-104.
- 48 **Jamalian, A.** My Response..., p. 2.
- 49 The Republic of Armenia between 1918 and 1920, p. 43.
- 50 **Avetissian, H.** The Armenian Question in 1918, p. 249. The unique documents H. Avetissian revealed in the Hungarian archives attest that Buriany, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey's ally Austro-Hungary, regarded the Treaty of Batum as a historical fall for Armenia, whose territories, including Shirak and Akhalkalak, forming part of it for many centuries, had been annexed by the neighboring state (*idem*, p. 256).
- 51 *Idem*, p. 255.
- 52 The Republic of Armenia between 1918 and 1920, p. 49.
- 53 **Vratsian, S.** The Republic of Armenia, pp. 214-215. **Jamalian, A.**, *idem*, in: "Hayrenik," April 1928, p. 91.
- 54 The Republic of Armenia between 1918 and 1920, p. 58.
- 55 National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 3, pp. 127-127ա; Personal Archives of Leo, fund 1, list1, file 264, pp. 1-2.
- 56 Էրբորա, 1918, 19 հուլիս ("Ertoba," July 19, 1918); "Hayrenik," September 1928, p. 123.
- 57 During those attacks, the Turks kidnapped or killed about 1,500 Armenians, also stealing their belongings and a great number of animals ("Horizon," 1918, June 27, No. 125). Indeed, those refugees who had found haven in their compatriots' houses in different Tzalka villages were in comparatively more tolerable conditions. However, they proved unable to escape the epidemics, combined with numerous cases of armed robbery by the Muslim inhabitants of several Tzalka villages ("Hayrenik," September 1928, p. 122).
- 58 "Nork," 1999, No. 2, p. 21 (published by V. Ghazakhetsian). Cf. Հայաստանի աշխատավոր, «Երես առաժնեքը», 1919, 24 հունիս (The Spoilt Ones. In: "Hayastani Ashkhatavor," June 24, 1919), No. 79.
- 59 "Hayrenik," September 1928, p. 123.
- 60 The membership of the Department also included B. Maghakian, Hovh. Badalian, V. Nazaretian and T. Maghakian.
- 61 Армянский вопрос и геноцид армян в Турции (1913-1919), сборник (составитель, отв. ред., автор предисловия В. Микаелян), Е. (The Armenian Question and the Genocide of the Armenians in Turkey (1913 to 1919). Compiled by editor-in-chief and author of the foreword Michaelian, V. Yerevan), 1995, pp. 560-561.
- 62 **Galoyan, G.** Armenia and the Great Powers Between 1917 and 1923, p. 39.
- 63 "Horizon," August 30, 1918.
- 64 **Jamalian, A.**, *idem*, p. 90.
- 65 **Abeghian, A.** Our Neighbours and We. In: "Hayrenik," December 1928, No. 2.

- 66 That meeting was also attended by Hovh. Spendiarian, L. Evangulian, Doctor Ter-Stepanian and others.
- 67 National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 3, pp. 131-131u.
- 68 "Horizon," June 27, 1918, No. 125.
- 69 They, however, proved unfit for their posts, for they appropriated the relief provided for the refugees (see National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 3, p. 130).
- 70 "Mshak," 1919, No. 14.
- 71 Personal Archives of Leo, fund 1, list 1, file 264, pp. 1-2.
- 72 National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 3, p. 131u.
- 73 "Politika," 1998, Nos. 4-6, p. 5.
- 74 Documents and Materials on the Foreign Policy of Transcaucasia and Georgia, p. 434.
- 75 Idem, pp. 434-435.
- 76 Idem, p. 435.
- 77 The Turkish troops moved out of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak Districts on November 27, taking a large amount of stolen property with them.
- 78 Some Georgian political scientists and historians ignored the pivotal role the Turks played in the unleashing of the Armeno-Georgian conflict. Instead, they were more occupied with laying the blame for that on one another.
- 79 The Republic of Armenia between 1918 and 1920, p. 74; "Politika," 1998, Nos. 4-6, p. 6.
- 80 Ibid. It should be noted that the unification of Akhalkalak and Borchalu with the Republic of Armenia was considered fair and expedient not only from ethnic, political and economic but also geographical standpoints. With this respect, A. Jamalian, Armenia's diplomatic representative in Georgia, writes, "The map clearly shows that both Akhalkalak and Armenian Borchalu are directly connected with Armenia, forming its natural continuation. Therefore, there can be absolutely no geographical obstacles for these districts to join the country representing their national identity" ("Haraj," June 28, 1928, No. 685, p. 2).
- 81 National Archives of Armenia, fund 206, list 1, file 2, p. 105, cf. The Republic of Armenia between 1918 and 1920, p. 73.
- 82 "Politika," 1998, Nos. 4-6, p. 7.
- 83 **Jamalian, A.**, idem, p. 94; The Republic of Armenia between 1918 and 1920, p. 75.
- 84 After the Turkish troops had withdrawn from Lori in October 1918, the Armenian armed forces attempted to penetrate into the district, but the patrolling German detachments hindered them from doing so, Von Kres even threatening Armenia with war in case it happened. Taking advantage of the Germans' support, the Georgian units invaded Lori and established control over the local Armenian villages ("Haraj," June 19, 1928, No. 677, p. 2).

- 85 Vratsian, S., *idem*, pp. 225-226.
- 86 The Republic of Armenia between 1918 and 1920, p. 77; Galoyan, G., *idem*, pp. 52-53.
- 87 The Republic of Armenia between 1918 and 1920, p. 79.
- 88 **Թադևոսյան Մ.**, Հայաստանի Հանրապետության քաղաքական կյանքը անդրկովկասյան և սփյուռքահայ մամուլի լուսաբանմամբ (1918 մայիս-1919 մայիս), թեկնածուական ատենախոսություն, ձեռագիր, Ե. (Tadevossian, M. The Political Life in the Republic of Armenia as Reported in the Transcaucasian and Diasporan Armenian Press (May 1918 to May 1919). An unpublished Ph. D. Thesis. Yerevan), 2001, pp. 84-99. The “Zhoghovurd” (Yerevan), the press organ of the Armenian People’s Party, regarded it quite fair that Lori and Akhalkalak should join Armenia («Ժողովուրդ» (“Zhoghovurd,” February 9, 1919), the Dashnaksutiun completely sharing that viewpoint. Other mass media identified the problem with the French-German conflict over Alsace and Lorraine (Tadevossian, M., *idem*, p. 95).
- 89 **Հարությունյան Կ. Ա.**, Հայկական ազգային զորամիավորումները 1918-1945 թվականներին, Ե. (Harutiunian, K. A. The Armenian National Army Units Between 1918 and 1945. Yerevan), 2002, p. 58:
- 90 Vratsian, S., *idem*, pp. 242-248.
- 91 The Republic of Armenia between 1918 and 1920, pp. 80-81.
- 92 “Zang,” December 20, 1918.
- 93 Vratsian, S., *idem*, pp. 234-235.
- 94 The Republic of Armenia between 1918 and 1920, p. 81.
- 95 For the discussion of the border disputes, see **Խառատյան Վ., Լոռու և Ախալքալաքի հարցը 1919թ. հայ-վրացական խորհրդածողովում, Հայոց պատմության հարցեր, Գիտական հոդվածների ժողովածու (Kharatian, V. The Issue of Lori and Akhalkalak at the 1919 Armeno-Georgian Conference. In: Issues of Armenian History. Collection of Scientific Articles), No. 2, pp. 98-103.**
- 96 National Archives of Armenia, fund 276, list 1, file 104, p. 77. In response to Gedevanov, General Korganov reminded those present that two of the most important military operations within World War I, i.e. the break-through of the defensive line of German Hindenburg and the conquest of Erzurum, had been carried out in winter. Besides, the presence of a considerable number of Georgian armed forces in Akhalkalak endangered the positions of the Armenian army units in the south of Borchalu District.
- 97 National Archives of Armenia, fund 276, list 1, file 104, pp. 78-79. So great was the Georgian delegation’s confidence in Stuart that Gedevanov demanded that the Englishmen ban Armenia from having even a single soldier on the border of Akhalkalak District.
- 98 National Archives of Armenia, fund 276, list 1, file 104, pp. 80-82.

- 99 **Galoyan, G.**, *idem*, p. 54.
- 100 The Neutral Zone of Lori was divided in 3 sub-districts, each of which comprised 4 to 5 volosts, i.e. groups of villages. The sub-district of Alaverdi consisted of 4 volosts with 11 villages, that of Uzunlar (present-day Odzun) had 4 volosts with 11 villages, and Vorontsovka 5 volosts with 15 villages. See National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 56, pp. 3-4 for the list and borders of the villages included in the Neutral Zone.
- 101 National Archives of Armenia, fund 113, list 3, file 75, pp. 3a, 5a.
- 102 *The Republic of Armenia between 1918 and 1920*, pp. 82-83.
- 103 **Galoyan, G.**, *idem*, pp. 99-100.
- 104 "Grakan Tert," December 18, 1964. Cf. Ջօր. Անդրանիկի Կովկասեան ճակատի պատմական օրագրութիւնը, 1914-1917, Պոսթոն (The Historical Diary of War-Lord Andranik on the Caucasian Front. 1914 to 1917. Boston), 1924, pp. 150-152.
- 105 **Jamalian, A.**, *idem*, pp. 95-96.
- 106 National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 191, p. 34; *The Republic of Armenia between 1918 and 1920*, pp. 98-99.
- 107 **Jamalian, A.**, *idem*, p. 99.
- 108 **Varandian, M.** *Le Conflit arme no-ge orgien et la guerre du Caucase*, Paris, 1919, p. 144; **Jamalian, A.**, *ibid*.
- 109 **Ասարանյան Ա.**, Սարդարապատից մինչև Սևր և Լոզան, Ե. (**Aaronian, A.** *From Sardarapat to Sevr and Lausanne*. Yerevan), 2001, pp. 26-27.
- 110 National Archives of Armenia, fund 206, list 1, file 84, p. 28; *The Republic of Armenia between 1918 and 1920*, p. 114.
- 111 Նորր, Համերաշխության հիմքը, Ե. (The Basis of Solidarity. In: "Nork," Yerevan), 1999, No. 2, p. 22; "Hayastani Ashkhatavor," June 26, 1919, No. 81.
- 112 **Vratsian, S.**, *idem*, p. 266. In 1919 to 1920, the American Committee of Relief allocated a considerable number of clothes and 250,000 poods of white flour to Akhalkalak's Armenian and Georgian fugitives. See National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 3, p. 132.
- 113 Akhalkalak's Museum of Regional History, file 3709, p. 1.
- 114 "Zang," March 30, 1919, No. 36.
- 115 National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 3, p. 124.
- 116 **Simonian, E.**, *idem*, pp. 112-113, 117-118.
- 117 "Zang," March 22, 1919, No. 33.
- 118 *Idem*, March 30, No. 36.
- 119 **Simonian, E.**, *idem*, pp. 111, 115.
- 120 **Արաքս, Ախալքալակի զավառի տնտեսական և քաղաքական ներկան.** Ջանգ,

- 1919, 22 մարտ (Arax. The Present Economic and Political Conditions of Akhalkalak District. In: "Zang," March 22, 1919), No. 33.
- 121 **Simonian, A.**, idem, pp. 118-119.
- 122 Unable to endure the severe climactic conditions typical of Javakhk, most of the former inhabitants of Imeret later returned to their settlements.
- 123 National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 3, p. 122ա. Certain families agreed to change their surnames, but the overwhelming majority of the Armenian Catholics did not yield up to the nationalistic aspirations of the Georgian authorities and flatly refused to renounce their national identity.
- 124 **Jamalian, A.** My Response..., in: "Haraj," June 28, 1928, No. 685, p. 2.
- 125 "Hayrenik," March 1929, p. 116.
- 126 "Hayrenik," April 1929, p. 148.
- 127 **Jamalian, A.** The Armeno-Georgian Problem. In: "Hayrenik," March 1929, p. 118.
- 128 **Ruben.** The Memoirs of an Armenian Revolutionary, vol. 7, p. 242.
- 129 National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 2, file 165, pp. 1-2; The Republic of Armenia between 1918 and 1920, p. 169.
- 130 **Ruben**, idem, p. 243.
- 131 "Ashkhatavor," June 16, 1920, No. 57.
- 132 **Avetissian, H.** The Armenian Question in 1918, p. 334. On February 12, 1919, the Armenian delegation participating in Paris Summit submitted a document entitled "Armenia's Demands," in which Akhalkalak District was mentioned among the other disputed territories as an integral part of the Republic of Armenia ("Zang," March 28, 1919; The Republic of Armenia between 1918 and 1920, p. 89).
- 133 **Aaronian, A.**, idem, p. 93.
- 134 "Ashkhatavor," June 16, 1920, No. 57. Russia's position on the issues of Lori and Javakhk, that became evident in the Russo-Georgian Agreement signed on May 7, 1920, indicated that the Soviet Government would hardly support Armenia in the forthcoming Armeno-Russian (Shant-Karakhan) negotiations over the disputed territories. Professor E. Zohrabian is quite right in his statement that L. Karakhan, the Deputy People's Commissar of the Foreign Affairs of Soviet Russia, was merely performing a frivolous diplomatic manoeuvre while assuring H. Terterian, one of the members of the Armenian delegation in Moscow (May to June 1920), that Russia was ready to make all possible contribution to the settlement of the issue of the belonging of Akhalkalak, Akhaltskha, Khram, Batum and entire Dashtayin Karabakh in favour of Armenia. That policy was merely aimed at finding out what the Armenian side was inclined to think with that regard. See **Չոհրաբյան Է. Ա.**, 1920 թ. բուլղո-հայկական պատերազմը և տերությունները, Ե. (Zohrabian, E. A. The Turkish-Armenian War of 1920 and the Great Powers. Yerevan), 1997, pp. 68-70.

- 135 The leaders of the independent Transcaucasian republics failed to find any settlement to the territorial disputes at the numerous conferences held one after another. After the Sovietization of the region, the governments-in-exile of Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Mountaineers' Republics made a declaration (June 10, 1921) that all the disputes in Transcaucasia should be resolved only through arbitration ("Haraj," July 10, 1928, No. 695, p. 2). Even after that, however, they continued arguing (their arguments abounded in mutual charges) over those problems, including Lori and Akhalkalak, concerning which hundreds of press publications appeared.
- 136 See **Zohrabian, E. A.**, *idem*, pp. 150-152; **Galoyan, G.**, *idem*, pp. 311-315, 345 about the secret relations of Kemal's Government with the Georgian authorities.
- 137 The Republic of Armenia between 1918 and 1920, pp. 312-314.
- 138 See **Zohrabian, E. A.**, *idem*, p. 179 about Javahk Armenians' participation in the Armeno-Turkish war of 1920.
- 139 National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 56, p. 47.
- 140 *Ibid.* See the entire text of the agreement in the Armenian original of the present work (document No. 40).
- 141 Interestingly enough, in late 1920 and early in 1921, before the Bolsheviks started perpetrating wide-spread outrages, the representatives of the former authorities continued taking part in the discussion of the Armeno-Georgian territorial problems. Early in January 1921, G. Khatissian, a famous Dashnak and the brother of A.I. Khatissian, the ex-Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, made up a document which viewed the acquisition of Ardvin Okrug (region) more profitable for Armenia than Lori and Akhalkalak, for the former could become the country's passage to the Black Sea (National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 12, pp. 14-15). That erroneous approach was primarily based on the position the Republic of Armenia held in 1920: according to it, the country should prioritize not the Transcaucasian territories but the fortification of its position in Kars Region and the policy of the unification of Western Armenia through the Entente.
- 142 National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 12, pp. 13, 110.
- 143 *Idem*, file 24, pp. 53, 80-81.
- 144 National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 3, p. 132.
- 145 *Idem*, file 46, pp. 65-66.
- 146 State Central Archives of the Documents of the Political and Non-Governmental Organizations of the Republic of Armenia, fund 1, list 1, file 122, p. 131.
- 147 *Idem*, collection 1, file 2.
- 148 **Galoyan, G.**, *idem*, p. 393.
- 149 *Idem*, p. 407.
- 150 State Central Archives of the Documents of the Political and Non-Governmental Organizations of the Republic of Armenia, fund 1, list 1, file 122, p. 131.

- 151 **Մելքոնյան Ա.**, Ջավախքի գողգոթան, Ազատամարտ, 1992, 24 ապրիլ, էջ 12 (Melkonyan, A. The Golgotha of Javakhk. In: "Azatamart," April 24, 1992, p. 12):
- 152 Ibid.
- 153 **Սարգսյան Ե. Ղ.**, Թուրքիան և նրա նվաճողական քաղաքականությունը Անդրկովկասում (1914-1918), Ե. (Sargissian, E. Gh. Turkey and Its Occupation Policy in Transcaucasia (1914 to 1918). Yerevan), 1964, p. 512:
- 154 «Հայաստանը միջազգային դիվանագիտության և սովետական արտաքին քաղաքականության փաստաթղթերում (1828-1923)», կազմողներ՝ Ջ. Ս. Կիրակոսյան, Ռ. Գ. Սահակյան, Ե. (Armenia in the Documents of International Diplomacy and Soviet Foreign Policy (1828 to 1923). Compiled by Kirakossian, J. S., Sahakian, R. G. Yerevan), 1972, p. 500:
- 155 **Sargissian, E. Gh.**, idem, pp. 511-513.
- 156 State Central Archives of the Documents of the Political and Non-Governmental Organizations of the Republic of Armenia, fund 1, list 1, file 122, p. 131.
- 157 Ibid.
- 158 National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 46, p. 66. This document clearly shows Akhalkalak Armenians' pro-Russian position and their firm determination to join Armenia.
- 159 National Archives of Armenia, fund 113, list 3, file 15, pp. 15-17.
- 160 **Kharmandarian, S. V.** Lenin and the Establishment of the Transcaucasian Federation, pp. 101-102.
- 161 See the entire document (National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 3, pp. 122-134; fund 113, list 3, file 42, pp. 41-53) in the Armenian original of the present work (document No. 46).
- 162 R. Ter-Minassian adduces serious arguments proving that Javakhk does really belong to Armenia (**Ruben**. The Struggle of Akhalkalak. In: "Droshak," 1926, No. 1).
- 163 National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 3, p. 133.
- 164 Idem, p. 133ա.
- 165 National Archives of Armenia, fund 113, list 3, file 75, p. 2.
- 166 Ibid; file, 42, p. 55.
- 167 Idem, fund 113, list 3, file 3, pp. 3-5.
- 168 As the subsequent events came to prove, while trying to settle the territorial disputes, the Bolshevik leadership gave preference to the decisions of the high-ranking party-affiliated bodies rather than the authorities.
- 169 National Archives of Armenia, fund 128, list 1, file 674, pp. 7-8.
- 170 State Central Archives of the Documents of the Political and Non-Governmental Organizations of the Republic of Armenia. Collection 1, file 7, p. 45.

- 171 *Idem*, p. 43. Also see **Galoyan, G.**, *idem*, pp. 475-476 about the discussion of the problems of Lori and Akhalkalak.
- 172 Undoubtedly, if the Red Army had penetrated into Alexandropol and then Akhalkalak from Yerevan between January and February 1921, the carnage and plunder of the Armenians by the Turks would not have assumed such an enormous scale in Shirak and Javakhk. Besides, the Armenian Bolsheviks' endeavours to unite the district with Armenia could have yielded a desirable result.
- 173 State Central Archives of the Documents of the Political and Non-Governmental Organizations of the Republic of Armenia, fund 1, list 1, file 122, p. 131.
- 174 National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 24, p. 75.
- 175 *Ibid*.
- 176 *Ibid*; file 46, pp. 65-66.
- 177 National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 24, pp. 75-76.
- 178 *Ibid*.
- 179 National Archives of Armenia, fund 128, list 1, file 674, pp. 7-8, cf. **Մահակյան Ա., Անդրֆեդերացիայի ղեկավարությունը և Խորհրդային Հայաստանի սահմանների «ճշգրտումը», Դրոշակ, 1999, հոկտեմբեր (Sahakian, A. The Leadership of the Transcaucasian Federation and the "Verification" of the Borders of Soviet Armenia. In: "Droshak," October 1999), No. 16, p. 48.**
- 180 Later Filipovka was renamed after Myasnikian, whose revolutionary pseudonym 'Martuny' became the name of another village in the district, i.e. the Armenian part of Khospia.
- 181 We shall dwell upon this agreement below.
- 182 National Archives of Armenia, fund 113, list 3, file 55, p. 2w.
- 183 National Archives of Armenia, fund 113, list 3, file 116, p. 29, cf. file 55, pp. 3, 10.
- 184 National Archives of Armenia, fund 114, list 2, file 136, p. 20.
- 185 Under the agreement signed between A. Mravian and Svenidze, the People's Commissars of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Socialist Republics of Armenia and Georgia, the delivery of Vorontsovka and Privolny was to take place on December 27, 1921. Despite that, however, Georgia's representatives, who had arrived in Vorontsovka, refused to sign any document under the plea that the Georgian Government had not entitled them to do so. The true reason, however, was quite different: ignoring the Armeno-Georgian agreement of November 6, 1921, the Georgian authorities declared they could yield up the aforementioned lands only in case Lambalu and Kerpali (Sadakhlo District) as well as the territory lying west of them were delivered up to Georgia. It was only thanks to the drastic measures taken by the leadership of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia that in mid-January 1922, the Armenian powers established control over Vorontsovka and Privolny, organizing the

elections of Soviet Armenia's Councils there (National Archives of Armenia, fund 113, list 3, file 55, pp. 8-9, cf. Sahakian, A., *idem*, p. 48).

186 "Artanuji," 1998, No. 7, pp. 29-30.

187 National Archives of Armenia, fund 112, list 1, file 95, p. 100. The agreement also stipulated that the Georgian-Azerbaijani frontiers should be clarified, too for the purpose of smoothing away the serious discrepancies over them.

188 Sahakian, A., *idem*, p. 49.

CONCLUSION

Javakhk was originally one of the nine districts of Gugark Province of the historical kingdom of Metz Hayk. The district, which formed part of the Hayasa entity in the 2nd millennium B.C., is mentioned by the name of *Zabakha* in Araratian (Urartian) King Argishti's (786 to 764 B.C.) inscriptions. From the 6th to 3rd centuries B.C., it was one of the northern districts of the Orontid Kingdom. Armenian King Artashes I (189 to 160 B.C.) reunited Gugark Province, including Javakhk, with the Kingdom of Metz Hayk, within which it remained until the fall of the Arshakid Dynasty (428 A.D.); it is mentioned as the family estate of the Vardzavuny princely family.

After 428 A.D., the region became part of Sassanid Persia as a Marzpanutium. At the end of the 7th century, it was conquered by the Arabs. In the 10th century, Javakhk formed part of the kingdom of the Armenian Bagratids. In the first half of the 11th century, it became part of the Georgian state within which it remained until the Seljuk Turks' invasion. In the late 12th century, Javakhk, including its fort of Tmka (Tmuk) and Akhalkalak, was among those districts of Northern Armenia that were bestowed upon the Armenian princely house of the Zakarians as their hereditary family estate; its spiritual center was the township of Zresk. After the overthrow of the Mongol yoke in 1266, the region formed part of the principality of Samtskhe-Javakhk. In 1587 the Ottoman Turks conquered and annexed it to Cheldr (later Akhaltskha) Eyalet (also known as Vilayet), later to be known as a separate sanjak (district).

Since time immemorial Javakhk has been inhabited by the Armenians, which is attested by various Armenian, Georgian, Arab, Turkish, and other sources. According to Georgian historian Leonti Mroveli, early in the 4th century, when St. Nune (Nino, as referred to by the Georgians) was preaching Christianity in Javakhk, the local population's vernacular was Armenian. The Turkish tax lists, dating back to the 16th to 18th centuries, reveal that the Armenians inhabited most of the settlements in Javakhk and the adjacent districts. This is also confirmed by famous

geographers Vakhushti Bagrationi, Ghukas Injijian, a member of the Mkhitarist Congregation, and others.

Together with a number of other districts in South Caucasia, Javakhk appeared in the sphere of the foreign policy of the Russian Empire in the early 19th century. In July 1828, General I. F. Paskevich's troops occupied its center, Akhalkalak. In 1830, 7,300 Armenian families from Erzrum, Basen, Baberd, Derjan, and other districts of Western Armenia resettled in Akhaltskha, Akhalkalak, and Tzalka (Treghk District of Gugark Province) under the leadership of Archbishop Karapet Bagratuny. The newcomers reconstructed and founded more than 60 villages and 50 churches, thus restoring Javakhk's former ethnic Armenian make-up: about 58,000 Western Armenians became the neighbors of 1,716 Armenian families (about 10,000 to 11,000 people), as well as 639 Muslim and 179 Georgian households.

In 1840 Akhalkalak District, which occupied most of the territory of the former Turkish sanjak, was included in the Georgian-Imeretian Province. In 1846 it became part of Tiflis Province and turned into an independent district in 1874.

From 1841 to 1843, the Dukhobors, Russian sectarians banished from different Russian regions, settled down in the south of the district (the present-day district of Ninotzminda) and founded between 8 and 9 villages there. Thus, Javakhk was converted into a heterogeneous district: in 1886 it had 110 villages comprising 10 communities with a total population of about 63,800, of whom 46,386, i.e. 72.7 %, were Armenians, the Muslims constituting 10.7 %, the Russian Dukhobors 10.4 %, and the Georgians only 5.8 %.

Akhalkalak District enjoyed considerable socio-economic and cultural boom under Russian rule. Akhalkalak City became a crafts center, and the villages started playing an important role in the production of wheat and meat in Transcaucasia. In the early 1830s, Archbishop Karapet initiated the founding of parish schools for male pupils. Among them can be mentioned Karapetian and Mesropian Schools in Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak respectively.

In 1856, through the efforts of benefactor Karapet Yaghubian, the restoration of Sourb Khach Church was accomplished. In 1870 Sandkhtian Female School started functioning, followed by the establishment of some Russian schools in the early 1880s. In 1889 a City College was founded and a Theatrical Circle was organized.

In the late 19th century, through Jalal Ter-Grigorian and Poghos Abelian's endeavors, a Liberation Group was set up in Akhalkalak, which soon became one of the centers of activity of the Social-Revolutionary Party and Hay Heghapokhakan Dashnaktsutiun. Akhalkalak Armenians, most of whom were from Erzurum Province in origin and still retained spiritual ties with their former homeland, took an active part in the movement launched for the liberation of Western Armenia. Javakhk gave birth to such prominent personalities and figures as Hovhannes Kajaznuny, Hamo Ohanjanian, Ruben Ter-Minassian, Ruben Darbinian, writers Vahan Terian and Derenik Demirjian, national singer Jivani, and others.

In the aftermath of the Turkish invasion of Akhalkalak District in May 1918, the overwhelming majority of the local population, amounting to 80,000, emigrated into the woods of Bakurian and Tzalka, 35,000 to 40,000 of them perishing there. After the Turkish army units had left the district in late November, Georgia's Menshevik Government made territorial claims on Javakhk. Failing to arrive at any agreement over the problems of Lori and Akhalkalak, the sides engaged in hostilities in December. The Armeno-Georgian war was terminated only through the mediation of the British, Georgia temporarily gaining control over Javakhk as a result of the pressure the British High Command exerted on Armenia.

The Republic of Armenia did not abandon its efforts to regain it throughout its existence between 1918 and 1920. Meeting Akhalkalak Armenians' desire to be reunited with their homeland, the authorities of Soviet Armenia (Alexander Bekzadian, Alexander Myasnikian, Arshak Mravian, and others) demanded to return the district and Tzalka to Armenia. In July 1921, however, the Georgian and Azerbaijani Bolsheviks, who formed a majority and acted in unison, achieved the

annexation of both Akhalkalak and other Armenian territories to Georgia and Azerbaijan. On November 6, 1921, Soviet Armenia and Georgia signed an agreement on the Armeno-Georgian line of demarcation, which has been preserved up today with certain changes. After the November 6 agreement, the discriminatory policy against the Armenians of Akhalkalak assumed a new form. From time to time not only private individuals but also the local governmental bodies and Village Councils raised border issues.

Although the discussions of the aforementioned problems were held in secrecy during the Soviet times, they were nevertheless echoed in the foreign and local press. The study of the contemporary press reveals that these discussions reached a pinnacle especially in 1925, which was, probably, connected with Myasnikian's tragic death in February of the same year; he fell victim to an air crash, but the circumstances of his death remained obscure. Myasnikian, as mentioned earlier, had instilled confidence towards the Soviet rule amongst the Armenians of Akhalkalak with his personal authority and concrete methods of work.

Having lost the last glimmers of hope for support, the district's population again raised the question of unification of Akhalkalak with Armenia. Expressing the will of the people, in 1925 37 Village Councils sent petitions to the supreme authorities of Armenia, Georgia, and the USSR; they also sent special delegations to Yerevan and Tiflis. The problem, considered "grotesque" in the framework of the time, was to be investigated by Sergo Orjonikidze, considered "knowledgeable" in Caucasian affairs. According to a publication by TASS ("Pravda" newspaper, May 12) on May 10, 1926, the latter delivered a report at the conference of the Transcaucasian parties. He expressed profound concern that the Menshevik, Dashnak, and Musavatist Parties, known for their "divisive" activities, had not yet been eliminated in the region. Criticizing the "erroneous" approach certain high-ranking officials had taken with regard to the national issue in the given territories, he said, "Last year 37 villages of Akhalkalak voiced a desire to join Armenia."¹ Apparently, the Bolshevik politician emphasized the number "37" to stress that not all of

the settlements of the district were unanimous in their wish to be reunited with Armenia. Orjonikidze, however, forgot that 37 was a remarkable figure for the district whose villages totaled 80, between 10 and 12 of them being inhabited by the Dukhobors and Georgians. Without counting these villages, we see that more than half of the local Armenians had desperately chosen that dangerous path. Ordzhonikidze considered this fact "scandalous," expressing his surprise at the Armenians' "unnatural" desire to leave Soviet Georgia and join Armenia.

It turned out that the mountainous part of Gandzak (Gyanja) District (Karabakh - A. M.) faced the same situation. Orjonikidze attempted to hide his Government's failure in conducting a proper policy on nationalities; he interpreted the protests of the Armenians both in Akhalkalak, which was under Georgian control, and in the districts under Azerbaijan's rule, as based not on political but purely economic causes. According to him, Transcaucasia's People's Commissariat of Land had not allocated sufficient arable soil to the Armenians of Javakhk, as a result of which they had entered into conflict with the sheep-breeding Georgians. As for Gyanja (Karabakh - A. M.) Armenians, they had not been given lands at all.

Naturally, the demands of the Armenians of Akhalkalak were not met. The scanty material available reveals that their delegates also applied to the Armenian Bolsheviks, including Sako Hambardzumian, hoping to at least be granted self-government within Georgia's borders. Hambardzumian, who had been demoted from the position of President of the Central Executive Committee of the Transcaucasian Federation² in 1925, probably due to the aforementioned frustrations in the policy on nationalities, "washed his hands," demanding that Akhalkalak Armenians return to their homes and remember that "the Communist Party knows to whom and when to grant autonomy."³

The "Haraj" newspaper published in Paris wrote the following about these events: "...today it is indisputable that the Armenians of Akhalkalak are striving to unite their district with Armenia. Both our and the Bolshevik press have informed our readers about the actions their Village Councils took in this respect."⁴

Guided by the spirit of Orjonikidze's speech made at the May 10 conference, and his statement that "the struggle against nationalism should be expanded," Stalin intensified the outrages against the "anti-Soviet" forces. Not only were the demands of the Armenians rejected, but also further border modifications were made, causing Armenia to suffer more losses. On August 13, 1927, Soviet Armenia and Georgia signed a new agreement on the establishment of administrative and economic borders for Leninakan (in Armenia) and Akhalkalak (in Georgia) Districts; this document was approved at the February 18, 1929 session of the Directorate of the Central Executive Committee of the Transcaucasian Federation. This time again the majority of the participants were Georgians and Azerbaijanis. As was expected, the decision ignored the interests of the Armenians. The session rejected the request of the Armenian side to allocate 80 dessiatinas of Georgia's land to Darakyoy Village of Leninakan District (present-day Saragyugh in the sub-district of Ashotsk, Shirak Marz, Republic of Armenia). As for the Leninakan-Akhalkalak Section, it was noted that the Georgian-Armenian border was not subject to further modification.⁵ Later, until 1933, certain changes did take place, costing Armenia still new losses.⁶

Thus, in border issues, Soviet Armenia, being alone against Soviet Azerbaijan's and Georgia's more influential Bolsheviks and Moscow's policy of supporting them, was weakened and forced to yield. Through mass repression, the Soviet leadership managed to stifle the protesting voices of both Javakhk Armenians and their compatriots living in the territories annexed by Georgia and Azerbaijan.

In the subsequent years, with the fortification of Stalin's tyranny, the problem was consigned to total oblivion. Moreover, the approach that it should be settled within the bounds of "international friendship" involuntarily became dominant among the population. The attempts to introduce any changes in the frontier lines gradually became unacceptable and highly dangerous; the majority of those raising that question received jail terms or were sent into exile in the 1930s.

Most of the former district of Akhalkalak became the basis for the establishment of an administrative district of the same name which later turned into a region.⁷ The northern villages of Tabatzghur, Molit, and Chkharola became part of Borzhom District, while Damala was included in Aspindza District established later. In 1930 the southeastern part of Akhalkalak was partitioned off from the region, forming Bogdanovka (present-day Ninotzminda) District.

The unfavorable functioning of the political and socio-economic leverage in the Soviet years marked the beginning of mass emigration from Javakhk, gradually becoming one of the characteristic features of the demographic situation in the district. In this respect, it was by no means accidental that in the years of World War II, Akhalkalak suffered a greater number of losses than the other Armenian territories. Suffice it to say that out of the 12,684 enlisted Akhalkalak Armenians, 7,788, i.e. 61.4 % were killed (this number also includes those that were lost during the hostilities).⁸

Ethnic "cleansing" also awaited the Meskhetian Turks: in the summer of 1944, Stalin exiled them from Akhaltskha, Adigen, Aspindza, and Akhalkalak Districts to Central Asia on charge of high treason. Meanwhile, the local Armenians were banned from occupying the villages emptied of their Turkish inhabitants. A huge number of Georgian resettlers moved there from Imeret, the Georgian Government housing them in the Meskhetians' dwellings. In the aftermath of that demographic movement realized by the Georgian authorities, the Georgian-populated district of Aspindza came into being between the densely inhabited Armenian districts of Akhaltskha and Akhalkalak. Parallel with that, from 1946 to 1949 a considerable number of Armenians were exiled from the Armenian-populated localities of Soviet Georgia, including Javakhk, to Altai and Siberia.

From 1950 to 1970, due to the economic and political conditions, the number of the Armenians emigrating from Javakhk grew still larger. That is why, in 1989 the total population in Akhalkalak and Bogdanovka Districts (together they mainly constituted the territory of the former district of Akhalkalak or Historical Verin Javakhk), which had always been

distinguished for a high birth rate and large families, plummeted to 105,000, i.e. the same number as in 1917.

The earthquake that struck Adzharia in April 1989 rendered a great number of people homeless and inflicted damage upon others. The Georgian Government did not hesitate to resettle them in several Georgian villages in Akhalkalak (Kotelia, Hokam, Gogashen, Chunchkha, etc.) and the Russian Dukhobors' settlements in Bogdanovka. Moreover, they embarked upon constructing two-storey houses for the newcomers, the scale of that work being unprecedented in both Akhalkalak and Bogdanovka throughout the seventy years of Soviet rule. Nevertheless, that action of the Georgian Government, aimed at altering Javakhk's demographic picture, did not yield any results; moreover, a considerable part of the Adzhars proved unable to endure the severe natural and climactic conditions typical of the district and were obliged to return to their former settlements.

At present Javakhk and the adjacent Armenian-inhabited localities live in rather harsh conditions. Under the Soviet rule, the region was completely ignored by the Georgian authorities. After Georgia declared independence, national discrimination against the Armenians in Javakhk and the entire Republic of Georgia grew even more severe. This is particularly true of the early 1990s, when Zviad Gamsakhurdia was president of the country. In Tbilisi and other large cities the Armenians were entrusted with high ranks only provided that they change their surnames to Georgian ones, ultimately becoming Georgians. The densely-populated Armenian localities in Akhalkalak and south of Georgia were included in the so-called "21-kilometre zone," where the privatization of lands and their purchase were banned. In order to break the homogeneity of Javakhk's ethnic make-up, the districts of Akhalkalak, Akhaltskha, Ninotzminda, Aspindza, and Adigen were united into a single administrative province with its center in Akhaltskha City, which was gradually being Georgianized. Consequently, Akhalkalak and Ninotzminda ceased representing independent districts, while Javakhk Armenians lost direct ties with Tbilisi. Most of the administrative bodies were moved to Akhaltskha. The electoral law, which provided for the proposal of the candidacy of Parliament deputies only on the

basis of party-affiliation, put the Armenian population, who did not have any organizations officially registered, in rather unequal conditions.

Nowadays Javakhk's economy is in a particularly grave situation. The widespread unemployment, national discrimination, the deepening mistrust towards the Georgian authorities, and the poor power supply are forcing thousands of people to abandon their native villages and emigrate to Russia and other countries.

The process of the removal (October to November 2000) of the Russian military base situated in Akhalkalak caused great concern among the Armenians, who psychologically perceived the presence of the Russian unit in their district as a guarantee of their safety; moreover, it had provided them with an exceptional opportunity to have some employment, for a great number of Armenians served or worked there.

Javakhk's educational and cultural life is not enviable either: most of the local Armenian schools are semi-destroyed. It has become a commonplace for the teachers not to receive salaries for years. We can hardly speak of any spiritual-ecclesiastical life there: there are only two priests in Akhalkalak and Ninotzminda. The pensioners and fighters for the liberation of Artsakh are in a severe financial predicament.

At present Historical Javakhk with its two districts is the most homogeneous Armenian territory outside the borders of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh (Mountainous Artsakh). It has about 100 villages that are mainly Armenian-inhabited: their inhabitants amount to more than 100,000, the Armenians constituting 95% of them. The neighboring districts of Akhaltskha, Aspindza, and Tzalka consist of about 30 Armenian villages, with a population of 60,000.

The harsh socio-economic and political conditions are now endangering the life of the native Armenian districts of Historical Javakhk, which still preserve their true Armenian spirit despite all the aforementioned.

Thus, the history of Javakhk reveals that throughout many centuries, this unique Armenian region was often exposed to devastation, emigration, and slaughter, sometimes becoming a theater of hostilities for the two neighboring peoples, the Armenians and Georgians, who are known to have shared

many vicissitudes of fate. We find it necessary to point out that it is of the utmost importance to study the problem of Javakhk on an objective scientific basis, to realize the modern political reality, and to settle the problems facing the two peoples through united efforts and in a civilized manner.⁹ We would like to remind the viewpoints of General Andranik and Arshak Jamalian, who ardently supported the approaches of the Armenian side concerning the problem of Javakhk.

At his meeting with the prominent Armenian commander (early May, 1919), Georgia's Foreign Minister Gegechkori attempted to lay all the blame for the unleashing of the Armeno-Georgian war on the Armenian Government. The high-ranking Georgian official expected the General to support that view, but what he received was a truly wise answer, honoring a national hero. Andranik said, "I am not inclined to decide which side is guilty and which one not. If you do not anchor love and friendship between these two peoples, both of them are going to suffer. The only difference between us will be a single night: our corpse will be buried in the evening, yours in the morning."¹⁰

In the publications of the Diasporan Armenian press of the 1920s, Jamalian sharply criticized the Georgian writers-in-exile. He also reminded his readers that the military settlement of the problems of Javakhk and Lori-Pambak was impermissible and should be prevented by all means...: "In case we suffer defeat, the Georgians will not win anything... By weakening our position, they will weaken themselves in the friendship of the peoples of Caucasia and the Near East."¹¹

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- 2 In 1922 S. Hambardzumian was elected co-president of the Central Executive Committee of the Transcaucasian Federation. In 1925 he was appointed head of Soviet Armenia's Council of People's Commissaries.
- 3 Abeghian, A., *idem*, p. 336.
- 4 "Haraj," June 28, 1928, p. 2.
- 5 National Archives of Armenia, fund 112, list 2, file 1405. pp. 171-174. The Armeno-Georgian border in its Lori Section was fixed in accordance with the decision of September 2, 1929 session of the directorate of the Central Executive Committee of the Transcaucasian Federation (National Archives of Armenia, fund 112, list 2, file 1412, pp. 84, 87-88).
- 6 Sahakian, A., *idem*, p. 50.
- 7 The Treaty of Moscow, signed on March 16, 1921, stipulated that the southern border of Akhalkalak District should run along the line fixed by Adrianople Treaty of 1829 (see National Archives of Armenia, fund 113, list 3, file 56, pp. 28, 38-39).
- 8 Melkionian, A. Javakhk: Outlines of History, pp. 44, 49.
- 9 See Мелконян А., Уроки армяно-грузинских отношений и проблема Джавахка, Կանթեղ, Գիտական հոդվածների ժողովածու, հ. 2 (Melkonyan, A. Lessons of the Armeno-Georgian Relations and the Problem of Javakhk. In: "Kantegh." A Collection of Scientific Articles, vol. 2, Yerevan, 2001, pp. 166-179); Melkonyan A. Lessons of Armeno-Georgian Relations and the Current Situation. Second Armenian-Georgian Political and Intellectual Dialogue. Tbilisi and Yerevan, April 12-14, 2000, London. 2000, pp. 10-14) about the present-day Armeno-Georgian relations, the problems facing Javakhk nowadays and the possible ways of settling them.
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- 11 Jamalian, A. My Response to the Publicists of the "Promete" and "Ankakh Vrastan." In: "Haraj," July 11, 1928, No. 696, p. 2.

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ASHOT AGHASI MELKONYAN

**Javakhk in the 19th Century and the 1st
Quarter of the 20th Century
(A Historical Research)**

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