

at the Cathedral of San Cristóbal. . . . This demands that we reconstitute ourselves. Our Magna Carta states that Mexican sovereignty emanates principally from its people. We now recognize . . . that it emanates from all the peoples that make up Mexico.”

### War against non-Indians

Just as the Serbian leaders have refused to recognize the Croats and Bosnian Muslims, and have claimed their lands as property of “Greater Serbia,” so, too, the *zapatistas* have unleashed a war against everything *mestizo* in the townships where the conflict is centered.

Through public advertisements, the cattle ranchers of Chiapas have requested the intervention of the federal government in the face of repeated invasions of “ranch properties [where] equipment, crops, and homes have been destroyed, and cattle stolen—all to the detriment of the family economy and that of the nation.” The ranchers add that 3,450 rural properties, which annually contribute 24,000 tons of meat, 18 million liters of milk, and other rural products to the national stocks, are at risk. They warn that the attacks against their property threatens “the judicial order, our institutions, and social peace.”

The social discontent of the *mestizo* population and of displaced Indians (otherwise dubbed the “other victims of the conflict”) in the battle areas is already evident. Recently, an enraged crowd expelled from the town of Altamirano the president of the National Human Rights Commission Jorge Madrazo, who had arrived in the community to defend the “human rights” of 10 nuns belonging to the Order of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul, accused by the town of being EZLN members. At the same time, the displaced Indians are more and more publicly insisting that the Mexican Army intervene in their defense against the attacks of the *zapatistas*.

### The NGOs’ ‘splendid little war’

The outbreak of this racial war, which at the moment has been confined to Chiapas, was supervised by various so-called non-governmental organizations (NGOs) recognized by the United Nations. At the beginning of the so-called “peace talks,” the EZLN’s Clandestine Committee sent a public letter to the NGOs in which it stated: “We know that the so-called non-governmental organizations have become a fundamental part of the movement for a dignified peace. . . . The NGOs have remained neutral. . . . We owe our arrival, safe and sound, at the dialogue site to the protective and vigilant mantle of all those good people who, without payment of any kind, have dedicated their time, their efforts and their labor to us, and who are protecting us at the risk of their own lives, freedom, and well-being. We have decided to entrust our lives and freedom . . . to the NGOs, because we have seen in them the future to which we aspire, a future [which] will render not only wars, but also armies, unnecessary.”

## The tragic winter of 1994 in Armenia

by Haik Babookhanian

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The small nation of Armenia this winter has withstood not only Azeri military aggression along the whole border, and especially in Nagorno-Karabakh, not only a political ultimatum from Georgia, but also bitter cold weather. Living under the Turkish-Azeri blockade, the Armenian population did not have much at their disposal in their battle to survive: They used anything they could get their hands on for fuel, from the trees growing along city streets and parks, to furniture and wooden floorboards. Especially hard was the fate of hundreds of thousands of refugees from Azerbaijan, who miraculously escaped the terrifying butchery in Sumgait, Baku, and the whole territory of Azerbaijan. There were also refugees from Karabakh and from the territories close to the border, whose houses were either occupied by the Azeri Army or destroyed by artillery attacks and air strikes against civilian targets. It has been as difficult to survive this winter as it was to survive the 1988 earthquake.

The tragedy of the winter in Armenia has shaken the world. International charitable organizations, as well as the Armenian diaspora and people of good will, started to organize humanitarian aid. Governments of a few countries joined in. The Armenian nation had high hopes regarding the decision of the American government to allocate \$15 million to Armenia for the purchase of 50,000 tons of oil, which should have been delivered by the end of November and distributed to the most needy groups of people, such as families with many children, pensioners, and invalids. However, most of them have not been able to redeem their coupons, since the date of delivery of the aid has been constantly postponed, whether because of new demands on the part of Georgia, or the Christmas holidays in the United States. Finally, the first oil deliveries arrived at the beginning of February.

The Armenian authorities, like the population, lived on hopes, and distributed small strategic reserves of oil in December, planning to replenish them once the promised aid came from the United States.

But that was the end of the international “carrots” for Armenia, and the beginning of “the stick.”

## New Azeri military offensive

It proved impossible to replenish the strategic reserves within two months, which undoubtedly had military significance. In December, the Azeri Army started an unusually strong offensive, which had been in preparation for a long time. We can only try to guess whether postponing humanitarian aid to Armenia was connected to the Azeri offensive, but the fact that the United States, Great Britain, Russia, and Turkey were all well informed about the time and strength of the attack leaves no doubt in the minds of political circles.

The offensive was preceded by the Azeri refusal to comply with a number of peace initiatives presented by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and Russia. Certain factors—a general mobilization, militant Holy War slogans, massive purchase of expensive military technology from a number of governments, involvement of foreign military advisers, a carefully prepared plan, and, finally, an unusually wide range of military activities—show that hopes regarding a successful offensive were entertained not only by Azerbaijan's leader Haidar Aliyev, who was worried about his unstable situation, but also by circles outside Azerbaijan. However, after losing a few airplanes, over 30 tanks, and 6-7,000 soldiers, the Azeris did not achieve the expected success.

It seems that this was one of the reasons that Aliyev visited London, where, to the anxiousness of the Russians, he successfully bargained with Azeri oil and pipelines from Central Asia to Turkey. A similar double game with Moscow and London cost Aliyev's predecessor the loss of power. It is difficult to say at the moment what the experienced KGB employee achieved in London, but London is playing a key role in the Karabakh conflict, just as it did in the 1920s, when it managed to separate Karabakh from Armenia and give it to Azerbaijan. It is not an accident that Aliyev's trip to London was followed by a visit by Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossian.

The war in Karabakh is taking new forms, not only in terms of its scale and methods, but also as a result of the involvement of certain international circles. After Aliyev's arrival from Russia, Azerbaijan was supplied with weapons, and the Azeri Army began working with Russian instructors and specialists who are directly participating in military actions. There have also been cases of Iranian citizens' involvement on the Azeri side, and a corps of 1,200 Afghani mujaheddin is one of the most efficient forces in the Azeri Army. Recently a great quantity of Chinese weapons has been found among the trophies of war. According to an article in the British newspaper *Independent*, while in London, Aliyev managed to solve the problem of hiring "volunteers" and purchasing weapons, at the price of some oil deals.

## The Turkish role

As for Turkey, an Anglo-American outpost in the East, it continues with impunity to blockade Armenia from the

west, with the use of the 50,000 armed forces directly on the border, showing no remorse about the genocide committed against Armenians in 1915, or the mass extermination of Kurds in eastern Anatolia, or even about the occupation of northern Cyprus.

Turkey does not even try to hide the fact of its help to Azerbaijan. Frequent meetings between high officials from Azerbaijan and Turkey (the last one was in February, when Aliyev visited Ankara) precisely coordinate the cooperation. Moreover, using the fact that Armenia is situated on the border between Christian and Islamic civilizations, Turkey attempts to portray the conflict as having a religious character, in order to involve the Islamic world in the war on the side of Azerbaijan. Despite the harmful role that Turkey is playing in this conflict, in the 1994 fiscal year, the United States is allocating \$540 million to help Turkey, of which \$405 million will be used for military expenditures. It is unquestionable that a part of this armamentarium will be firing at the villages and towns of Karabakh.

In November, the news was leaked to the Turkish press that American generals were training the Azeri Army. In December, the Moscow daily *Izvestia* published an article by A. Krivopalov titled "U.S Instructors Teach Military Art to Azeris." Gen. Richard Secord (ret.) plays the central role in the story. He is well known in connection with the scandal concerning arms deliveries to Iran. According to the London *Observer*, he presently has a position of consultant in the Megasil company, which appeared in Azerbaijan already in 1991 to reopen old oil fields.

At the present time, the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan is overshadowed by the Balkan problem in the heart of Europe, and international diplomacy so far has put off active involvement aimed at regulating the crisis in Karabakh. This approach is not only immoral and dangerous, but also criminal. It is immoral because, at the end of the 20th century, when on the ruins of colonial and totalitarian systems, freedom, democracy, and progress are being upheld as human values, the world community is passively looking on while Azerbaijan has been trying to subdue Karabakh with military force for seven years now.

It is dangerous, because a spreading of the conflict may drag in Turkey, Iran, and Russia, which would mean the beginning of World War III. It is also dangerous because all the rules of international law are being violated, first of all the right of a nation to self-determination, to fight for its national liberation; the population of Karabakh is being subjected to genocide, while the Turkish-Azeri blockade constitutes an international crime.

It is still not too late to put out the fire of the Karabakh war. On the international level, it means recognition of the independence of Karabakh, breaking the blockade of Armenia, and channeling the energy now being used for destruction, for the sake of progress, cooperation, and creation.