

THE ARTICLE OF SERGEY GORODETSKI ENTITLED “KARABAGH” (MARCH 1919)

Anushavan Zaqaryan



For the elucidation and evaluation of different aspects of the Armenian reality, revealing new facts and details of the second half of the 1910s are invaluable journalistic articles of Sergey Gorodetski (1884–1967), a prominent Russian poet, writer, public writer, translator, and public figure. Living and working in Transcaucasia, the Russian writer steadily watched the events in Armenia, internal and external situation of the country and steadily voiced the right to struggle and exist of the Armenian people.

In 1918–1919 in Karabagh, decisive events took place. Trying to occupy the region, Turks and Azeris put into practice violence against the peaceful Armenian population, hundreds of elderly people, women, and children were massacred, villages were robbed and set on fire. S. Gorodetski possessed unbiased information about the events in Karabagh and the general situation of Armenians in the region. It is not a coincidence that in those troublesome days he wrote an interesting article entitled as “Karabagh”.¹

The content of the article shows the deep knowledge of the Russian author of the history of Armenian people, its culture, which makes it possible to reveal the role of Karabagh for Armenia, defend the national interests of Armenians, and come to a well-founded and unambiguous conclusion. Karabagh is an autochthonous Armenian land. He wrote in particular.

“When fate pursues the nation, they (centers of culture and political life – A.Z.) become strongholds of national life, islands of hopes, and pledges of renaissance.

For the Armenian people, this last role has played and still plays the mountainous region of Karabagh.

The nature itself had given it enormous significance.

There, in the inaccessible heights of Karabagh that continue the uplands of Kars and Sevan, over 2000 years the Armenian people had confronted the violent attacks of nomadic tribes and preserved their culture and national identity.

Being ethnographically, economically, and linguistically homogenous, Karabagh comprises the stronghold of Armenia, its eastern wing. It was so in the past, today, and

¹ “Kavazskoe slovo” (Tiflis), 23. III. 1919.

should be alike forever since the Ararat plain, the heart of Armenia could not be defended without Karabagh.”

The Russian writer gives the character of Karabagh people: “Wide scope, selfless courage, propensity for bravery, self-confidence, specific stubbornness, straightforward inflexibility, patriarchal character in domestic life; these are the attractive features of Karabaghi people - to a certain extent a compression of ancient Armenian virtues that was shadowed as a result of the savageness of history and in its pure form is preserved in Karabagh. The tall and vigorous people, proceeding to the mountains in order to save his life, were tempered in the mountainous air and saved himself from diseases, that could not did the plainmen.

The national memory of Armenia should remember many famous names of Karabaghi people. There is no region where they did not manifest initiative and talent - politics, literature, public life, trading; all these were spheres of their activity.”

Then S. Gorodetski lists some prominent Karabaghi people “whose names are well-known to everyone”. Of public figures, these are Aram Pasha (Manukyan), Saqo Sahakyan, in military sphere, General Lazarev, literators Leo, editor of “Armenian Bulletin” Amirov, and many others. “Giving so many male figures, Karabagh had created, more precisely had kept pure type of ancient Armenian woman, in whose everyday life has been preserved from patriarchy,” adds the Russian publicist.

Resuming his idea, Gorodetski concludes: “Such is the significance of Karabagh for Armenia. If he loses Karabagh, the self-determination of the nation should be limited drastically, and, on the contrary, owning Karabagh, Armenia could receive a rich influx of active cultural manpower, whose spread into the ruined regions of Armenia might impregnate them with their culture and thus the glorious centuries-long history of Karabagh would come to its final spot.

Now every people tries to find its goal. The future of nations depends on whether they could find in themselves enough, let us say, their own ferments of national culture. In such conditions, all centers where for one reason or another cultural life is centered, get exclusive significance. This is the role of Karabagh for Armenia”.

This highly valuable article, along with fixing the historical truth, presents the attitude of progressive Russian people towards the vital problem of Armenians. Deep and meaningful conclusions of the Russian public speaker concerning the problems of Karabagh by their objectivity and “neutral man’s” conscious view, still did not lose their actuality and significance.

Translated from Armenian by Aram Kosyan