

traditional Armenian instruments, receive the most virtuosic treatment in the able hands of Haroutunian, John Kozealian, Markos Shahbazyan, and Garo Der Hagopian. Ani Zargarian leads the vocals with a well-controlled voice free of overwrought embellishment, yet capable of a range of affects, from heart-rending yearning to the most joyous calls of celebration. Beautiful depth is provided by the adroit harmonies of background vocalist Tamar Melkonian.

The recording itself is a collection of Armenian songs old and new, ranging from twelfth-century spoken-word poetry by Nerses Shnorhali, to nineteenth-century folk songs immortalizing freedom fighters (*fedayis*) Arakel and Mushegh Yeghdanian; from traditional village dance and love songs to an ode to Gharabagh. Throughout, however, themes of renewal and rebirth abound. Unlike what many have come to expect of tribute albums such as these, *Arev* acknowledges the memory of the victims of the Genocide not through a mourning of the lives they lost, but through a celebration of the country they will always represent.

Sylvia Alajaji

Leonidas T. Chrysanthopoulos

Caucasus Chronicles: Nation-Building and Diplomacy in Armenia, 1993–1994

Princeton and London: Gomidas Institute, 2002. 200 pages, map, illustrations, bibliographic references, index. ISBN 1-884630-05-7 (cloth), \$29.95

Ambassador Chrysanthopoulos has written an engaging account of his experiences in setting up the Greek Embassy in Armenia in July 1993, and of the events in Armenia and Gharabagh during the following six months until his departure for

the European Union presidency in Athens in February 1994.

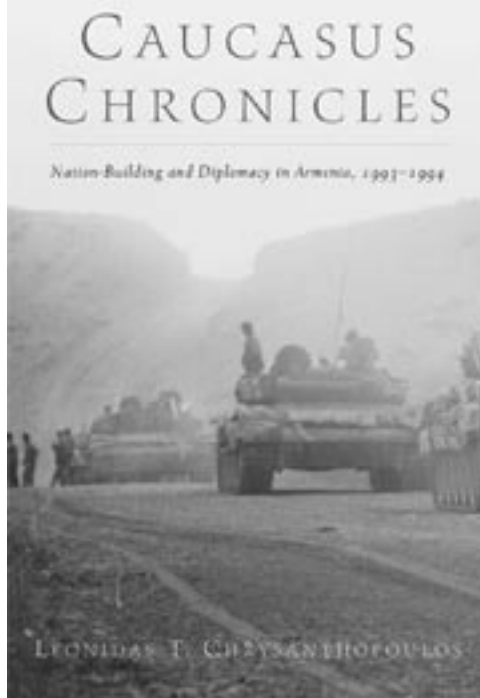
Chrysanthopoulos writes of the early days of European diplomatic representation in Yerevan when Greece joined France and Germany, together with Egypt and the United Nations, in occupying, one floor above another, a 1960s hotel overlooking the Hrazdan gorge. “Tower of Babel” or “cocktail” might have been tempting descriptions but, as Chrysanthopoulos relates, a lot of collective European Union work as well bilateral business was done there, and invaluable information exchanged. The missions’ multilayer existence must have been no bad thing during an appalling winter when communications and power supplies often broke down, food was scarce, and getting around in the relentless cold was a numbing experience. But no word of complaint from the Greek ambassador whose improvisatory skills, especially in preparing dinner for his colleagues, must have been legendary. Instead, a modest pride in his and his staff’s achievements in getting the Greek mission to Armenia going, with only grudging support from Athens.

Books about the first years of independence in the smaller countries of the USSR tend to be especially valuable because events there, though often dramatic, were largely overshadowed by what was going at the same time in Russia and the Balkans. Chrysanthopoulos shows for instance how easily the war in Gharabagh might have become a counterpoint to Bosnia, had Yeltsin not won his trial of strength with Khasbulatov and if Russian troops had been withdrawn from Armenia’s border with Turkey as a consequence. Here he brings to light intelligence reports of September–October 1993, which confirmed Turkish troop deployments on the border with Nakhichevan and suggested that Ankara’s special

interest in events in Moscow could have had serious implications for Armenia's security. Fortunately for Armenia, Yeltsin prevailed and the Russian forces stayed.

Chrysanthopoulos also charts the course of the Gharabagh conflict in 1993 by extensively quoting from documents of the United Nations, the European Community, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)—documents that now lie forgotten. His extracts are useful reminders of the international community's even-handed reaction to events. The taking of Kelbajar was one of the more controversial episodes for which Armenians are still blamed. But who today remembers the original United Nations Security Council Resolution 822 of 30 April, which called for the withdrawal of "all occupying forces from the Kelbajar and other occupied areas of Azerbaijan?" (emphasis added)

The British reader will be surprised to note the United Kingdom's interest in joining the OSCE Minsk Group, apparently voiced by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office minister Douglas Hogg during a visit to Yerevan in September 1993. According to Chrysanthopoulos, the United Kingdom actually submitted a formal request on 25 October, not only for membership, but for chairmanship of the group as well! If so, somebody must have had second thoughts, for the United Kingdom has since shown no further wish to join the Minsk Group, leaving it to others to try to resolve the Gharabagh conflict. The British maintain that Armenia would oppose UK mediation because of their political and commercial interests in Azerbaijan. In fact, Armenians argue that it is these very interests that should motivate the United Kingdom to find a balanced settlement that would stick. It is only recently, however, that the British government, with parliamentary prodding, seem



to have reached the same conclusion and are now seeking a more active role for the United Kingdom in the region.

The book also reveals how shortsighted European policies were toward Armenia in those early days. Chrysanthopoulos draws attention to the Metzamor nuclear power plant as a case in point. Because of the European Bank's adamant refusal, on ecological grounds, to assist in upgrading and reactivating the plant, Armenia sought and obtained finance and fuel from the Russians, and safety and other technical upgrades from the Japanese, Americans, and French. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development even resorted to blackmailing tactics to prevent the reopening of Metzamor. But recommissioning went ahead in 1995, thus ensuring energy sufficiency in Armenia for the first time in four winters. Going it alone, however, left Metzamor a hostage to fortune, and the plant now finds itself under almost total Russian control. The unwillingness of the Europeans to deal

with Armenia except on a regional basis (even allowing for Armenia's well-known unreliability as an investment partner) was partly responsible for Armenia's excessive debt to Russia and the need to reduce it through equity transfer.

The author's mission to Armenia was of course also a mission to the Greeks. In a separate chapter on the Greek community, Chrysanthopoulos conveys not only the enthusiasm with which they greeted his arrival, but his deep sense of obligation toward them. The humanitarian relief operation "Flame of Hope," which he organized, is a tribute not only to him personally, but to the generosity of the Greeks toward their less fortunate compatriots. This is also reflected in the willingness of the Greek mission, despite its tiny size and cramped quarters, to undertake from the outset the problems and intricacies of visa work.

Caucasus Chronicles is a model diplomatic memoir. It is written in plain English, detached in style, accurate and penetrating in its observation. Chrysanthopoulos reveals much that is interesting, but respects confidences. He has an eye for domestic detail, which gives warmth and color to his vignettes. He is not afraid to admit that on leaving Armenia, he felt as if he had left his heart there and, "in exchange," was taking all Armenia's problems with him. This is a feeling that many of his colleagues might share. But few would say so.

The book has useful chapter headings and an admirable index. The Gomidas Institute are to be congratulated on the quality of the book's presentation, as of its print and paper.

David Miller